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The SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

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CHARMED CIRCLE," A 20,000 WORD STORY OF SMART SOCIETY

By WILLIAM DRAYHAM

ORT STORIES OF A DECIDEDLY NEW SORT

AUGUST 191

The Roof Garden

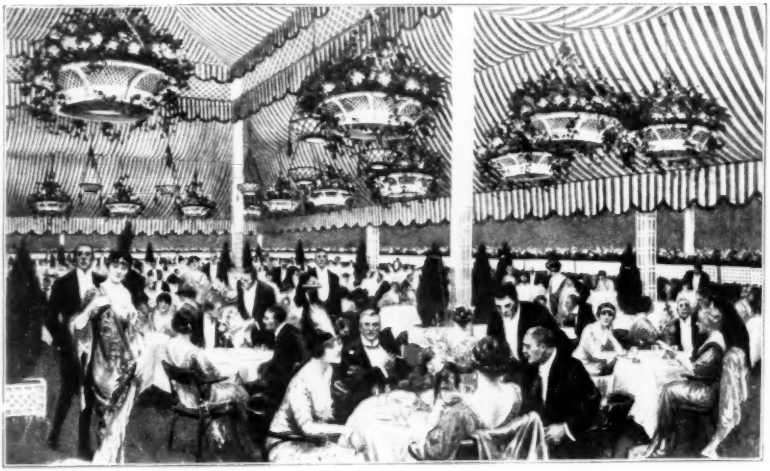
The Japanese Garden

of the

RITZ-CARLTON

NEW YORK

ALBERT KELLER, General Manager



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Vol. LII AUGUST, 1917 No. 4

The SMART SET

Manuscripts *must* be addressed, "Editors of THE SMART SET"

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BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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Vol. LII AUGUST, 1917 No. 4

The SMART SET

A Magazine of Distinction for Persons of Taste

PERFUMES

By Helen Woljeska

MADAME La Comtesse lay dying. Beyond a doubt, the end was near. Mournfully, noiselessly, her companion busied herself about the lace and satin of the bed, or, like a shadow, slipped away through deserted rooms, fulfilling some order of the fragile, faded, flowerlike creature whose eyes still blazed so vividly, while the ivory features already seemed as carved in death.

Madame la Comtesse wanted violets, many violets, to be smothered in violets! Her little, emaciated hands crushed the flowers, while, pulsating, the fine nostrils drank in their perfume. And that perfume, like some magic potion, conjured up the vision of a night at the Paris Opera—the night when she first had danced herself into fame and all Paris lay delirious at her feet. Violets . . . when all the flowers of all the climes had been showered upon her. The little passionately purple bunch had outshone them all. For Gaston had pressed it into her hand, to her breast, while his burning lips were upon hers. And that night the wild, black-eyed boy had seemed more important than a prince of blood royal. . . .

Enough.

Albine had to bring the curiously enameled golden casket containing a mixture of patchouli and sandal wood —and, at once, beside her bed stood the man who had raised her to be his countess. Elderly, effeminate, ultra-exquisite, he yet had been a true man, and truly a gentleman. The high-bred repose of his personality enveloped her once more. Proudly she basked in the consciousness of belonging to the highest caste of civilization, the flower of the world—she, a child of the gutter! Ah—he had been a good man— A little tear stole down the withered cheek. She closed her heavy lids and lay motionless. Was she asleep?

Once more she opened her eyes. They were hot and defiant. She called for the crystal bowl of sea water in which wonderfully colored shells and bits of deep red seaweed were floating. But she did not look at their iridescent beauty. The whiff of salt air brought back the beach of Trouville of the late eighties—the glittering crowd, the blazing sky, and him—him—straight as an arrow, blond as a Viking, fascinating as only a Lord Melville could be—him—who had nearly cost her title and life! The pale, proud face was exultant.

Then it altered. A slow smile of disgust strangely blended with desire crept over it. She called for the tiny silver-embossed flask filled with some Cowie's Extra. Albine had to remove the jewelled stopper and Madame la Comtesse breathed deeply of the fiery aroma. At once the picture of the aristocratic boy vanished. A brutal face, a compelling presence took his place. Her frail body shook. A prizefighter over whom, for one season, all Paris had gone quite made. . . . Ah! . . . Away with him!

She flung the girl's tender hand from her.

And now—her own trembling fingers groped for a little box. Albine took it off the table by her bed. She opened it. It contained some cheap cigarettes and tubes of oil paint. A horrible combination of smells! But the dying woman seemed to prefer it to all the perfumes of Araby. She breathed it ecstatically. Ah! it brought back youth! How gay, how sunny, how innocent all life and love had been! She was a half-grown girl once more, posing in a bare attic studio, and before the easel sat . . .

"Raoul—" she sighed—"Raoul—"

And with the name of her first love upon her ashen lips, Madame la Comtesse passed away.

HER CONFESSION

By Charles Divine

IF you would have me love you,
Kiss me when I laugh;
And when I cry, seek no embrace,
But light a cigarette
And let the smoke
Drift stealthily across my face.

TRUTH is always exclusive. Her worshipers are few indeed. Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, you and I. . . . .

A MAN falls in love by deceiving himself. He escapes by deceiving the woman.

SOME women allow their husbands to kiss them for the sake of contrast.

THE CHARMED CIRCLE

By William Drayham

CHAPTER I

SO good an authority as Virgil, whose verse another poet has called "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man," remarked one day, possibly to his friend Horace, that "the shrubs and humble tamarisks have not their charms for all."

Almost two thousand years later another Horace, this time resident near Buffalo in the State of New York, came upon this aphorism and felt his life justified by classical precedent.

Horace Blackwell thought in terms of rich and rare orchids. When he thought of music it was Grand Opera that concerned him. The heroines of his dreams wore splendid stuffs of silk and velvet bought in far countries and about their white arms these dim princesses wore strange bracelets of carven jade greener than the distant sea.

Had he been enabled to choose the lot in life that he would have liked, Horace Blackwell would have dwelt in an old castle, gray with memories, and walked over springing turf that had shaken beneath the weight of armored knights and chargers in a day when there were courts of love, and tournaments were the diversions of the rulers.

Horace, therefore, at a small town near Buffalo which was a collection of factories rather than an eligible site for homes, felt the oppression of his lot more than most men. It is true the house of his aunt in which he had been brought up was the best house in the town. And it was true that this estimable lady had money which would be his. But there were drawbacks he could not overlook.

Smitten with the belief that work inevitably enobles, Mrs. Blackwell had insisted her nephew enter one of the factories that encircled her pleasant home. She preferred that he take a dinner pail and work from the bottom up. The lower rungs taught so much more of the real and lasting values of life, she explained.

Horace listened to her patiently. He was newly come from a small college and intolerant of provincial advice, but he knew so little of the life commercial that he supposed she was right in what she said.

But he grew agitated when he understood that she expected him to work as a common laborer so that when he arrived at her age he would be a partner in a factory which turned out so many millions of bottle openers a year.

"How old are you?" he demanded.

Mrs. Blackwell admitted being sixty-three. It seemed that her natal year had been marked by unprecedented calamities in the neighborhood, disasters by fire and flood, so that she could not possibly be mistaken.

"And I am twenty-three," he mused, "so that if I live forty years more I can own a part interest in a factory."

His aunt was disconcerted by an aimless question he flung at her with almost an appearance of anger. "And what sort of hands shall I have when I am your age?"

"Hands?" she cried. "What has that to do with it?"

He knew better than to tell her what was in his mind. He had beautiful hands for a man, long, white with tapering fingers and carefully kept nails. Many and many a time he had

seen in imagination these hands of his enclose in their own the tinier ones of some beautiful woman of rank and fashion in the world to which he had no right of entry. Forty years of bottle opening industries would make them gnarled and horrible. He could only contemplate such a disaster by assuring himself that if it were to come he would wear gloves night and day.

"I'm not built for that sort of work," he said at length. His aunt had a neat little property and she must not be wounded; also he rather liked her.

"What work are you built for?" she demanded.

"I will think it over and let you know," he said seriously.

"That's your father all over," she grumbled. "That man might have owned this town if he'd had a mind to." She snorted. "He used to collect flowers and ferns and went chasing butterflies and bugs on Sunday when the others were in Sunday school."

He looked at her with enthusiasm. So far he had only heard that his father was a failure from a business point of view. This was his progenitor in a wholly new light. He saw in him one who had also rebelled at the narrow circle. His aunt disapproved of the sudden light on interest.

"Chasing butterflies on Sunday afternoons!" she sneered. "I suppose you feel you'd like to do that?"

"I should like to chase them back to the rainbow from where they came," he said extravagantly.

In the end Horace chose, since he must obey his aunt, to become a bookkeeper. For five years he labored at this devitalizing work, and had the span of life permitted him to toil at it for five hundred years his skill would never have brought him to owning a factory.

But during those five years he had learned something of the life for which he longed. A girl from the co-educational college he had attended taught him much. She had been a governess in a wealthy household and assured him that knightly manners and stately graces belonged to a day that was dead.

"You've got to be a man of the world," said this sapient maid. "People don't write verses to their lovers any more; they take them to Tiffany's and let them pick out what they want.

"And," she continued a trifle vaguely, "you've got to have charge accounts everywhere."

The little book of verse that Horace had hoped some day to be a stepping stone to cherished love was laid aside reluctantly but instantly. Some of the stanzas had merit but most had not, so the world was little the poorer. His new ambition was to be a man of the world. Others have wrecked themselves in such attempts, but there was a streak of caution inherited either from his mother or acquired in the bookkeeping department of his factory.

He kept this ambition to himself, but went twice a week to Buffalo and patronized the spoken drama. Men of the world always did this, he knew. And there was the need, too, for him to understand the ordering of a dinner and the names of wines and liqueurs. Park and Merril's catalogues helped him with the wines, but Buffalo was a poor guide to one who sought knowledge of the gastronomic arts.

Effie Horton, the governess with ideas on modern society and the newer chivalry, was a great aid to him at first in shaping his nebulous ambitions. She was a pretty girl, her figure was svelte and charming, and he called to mind certain evenings of June, now three years gone by, when he had kissed her with all the relish that first love creates. There was a warmth, too, in her hair and caresses that many of his fellows would have appreciated more than he. She was the only girl whom he had kissed since he was emancipated from the stupid kissing-games of his childhood parties.

Effie Horton was engaged for the moment in endeavoring to aid two daughters of a Buffalo banker to pass their entrance examinations to a fashionable college. She met Horace often in Delaware Park near her employer's residence, and told him of her life in

New York, where she saw, if she did not mix with, the bearers of names that counted for much in the register of social distinction. Occasionally she had lunched with her employer, a lady of expensive tastes, in the really first-class restaurants and hotels. Horace was often a trifle annoyed that she did not remember more of the fashionable gossip she must have heard.

"How funny you are, Horace," she said when he had chidden her for this.

"I don't see that at all," he said stiffly.

"Silly boy," she returned. "What good can it do you? You'll never have enough money to last in that crowd ten minutes, even if you got in, which you couldn't do if you lived to be a million and eight years old. The man in the family I was kept a steam yacht. I've been on it. You could sleep forty guests on board, and it cost him twenty thousands dollars a month to keep it in commission. Then they had a grouse moor in Scotland, a cottage at Newport, a house on the Avenue, a chateau on the Loire, and a place near Aiken."

"And did you go to them all?" he asked enviously.

"I had to," she retorted, "but it was precious little fun for me to be on the outside looking in with no decent clothes to wear."

"But men made love to you," he asserted, looking at her appraisingly.

"Not the sort of men I wanted," she answered, "and not in the sort of way I liked."

"I'm afraid you're incurably romantic," he said, "the sort of girl who wants to love one man only till both of you get old and fat."

"It's the best way, Horace," she said earnestly. "The things I learned when I was with those people would make you sick."

"What things?" he asked eagerly.

"Oh, matrimonial mix-ups and misfits. It cured me of thinking I was going to marry a splendid millionaire."

He looked at her keenly. "Then you thought about that once?"

"Fool-girls always do. I was a fool-girl once."

"And what are you now?"

"Just an ordinary girl who will be happy to get a small flat in New York and a man I can love."

"That's an ambition that ought not to be difficult," he sneered.

Hers was a trivial aspiration for one who had heard of Millionaires' Row, longed to know Newport's cottagers and take to the waves from Bailey's Beach.

"You'd like the French and Italian *tables d'hôtes,*" she said presently. "One meets all sorts of interesting people there."

"What sort?" he demanded.

"Authors, musicians and artists mostly. At Gollat's one night Lennison, the cartoonist, drew a dandy cartoon on the tablecloth and dedicated it to me."

Somehow this did not appeal very strongly to Horace Blackwell. He doubted the breeding of men who habitually decorated restaurant napery, and the price of the dinner made him doubt the pedigree of the wine. By this time he could have told the inquirer the price of the better known vintages.

Effie looked at him and sighed. She supposed he would never understand how much she cared for him or believe that it was with him as a life partner she had grown so tender to the idea of a small comfortable home in New York. She had realized early that his ambitions overleaped her own and in his presence forgot the admiration other men were eager to proffer.

Plainly Horace Blackwell was not for her. When his aunt died he would have ten thousand dollars and a comfortable home. No great sum of money to support his ambitions, it was true, but riches to the daughter of a poor Episcopalian minister whose God had rewarded him with a dozen children.

A hundred times poor Effie swore she would not see him again and feel herself humiliated by his indifference. But there was a certain magnetism, unconsciously expended on his part, which kept her the companion of his evening whenever her duties allowed it.

"If anything should happen to your aunt what would you do?" she demanded one night at a theater.

He was engaged in observing how society actors took their stage leave of the ladies they loved; whether they turned their back on them or walked away backward as those do who retreat from royal presences and thus imperil bric-a-brac. He was beginning to see that society actors may vary in their interpretation of social graces and these variations puzzled him. He was so much engrossed in a provincial star of the John Drew school that she was compelled to repeat her question.

"If it happened in the right season I should go to Newport. But she'll outlive me," he concluded gloomily. The play was one of high life as the author imagined it to be and his participation in its glories seemed very far away. A moment later he was sorry for the impression he had given. "I hope she will live for years," he said emphatically as he thought of her constant kindness. "She's a dear old creature even if we don't often agree on things."

"She's sixty-two," Effie reminded him.

"That's nothing," he retorted, "she'll see eighty for certain."

Speculation on the span of life is invariably risky. Even as he spoke the poor old lady lay dead in her house. And there was something grimly humorous in the manner that one so sparing in her diet should come to her end.

Horace had telephoned from the mill that he was going to dine in Buffalo and go to a theater. And as the night was hot and the ice almost gone she determined to eat the steak she had bought and cooked for him. A piece of this unaccustomed delicacy stuck in her throat and choked her to death ere her condition was observed by the woman who was working in the adjoining kitchen.

The house and ground left to her heir was worth about seven thousand dollars. She begged him not to dispose of it. There would come a time, she said in a letter written not so long before her death and delivered to him by her lawyer, when he would see that the dreams he dreamed were idle visions and would realize that marriage and a home were nearer to happiness. He did not tell Effie Horton that his aunt hoped he would marry her. But he determined to honor her wish not to sell the house, although he might never be able to endure it as a home.

There remained about twelve thousand dollars besides, and with this in cash and a draft on a New York bank he tore himself free of his native town. And his manner of going was as incomprehensible as his whole life had been to those among whom he had moved. He did not even go to the mill to collect the monthly salary of seventy-five dollars that was due had he waited but twelve hours longer. Nor did he make the house to house visits that neighbors paid who were to adventure into distant parts. He left as caretaker the old woman who had waited on his aunt, and told her he would probably never return.

When he had gone they realized that this self-contained, good-looking, friendless son of their own soil was a stranger whom they had never known.

And since loyalty to strangers has never been accounted a virtue, most of them said he would come to a bad end, and many of them hoped it.

CHAPTER II

Horace reached New York during the last week of May and registered at a not too obtrusive hotel. It was not his intention to remain there long, since he had gathered from his researches in the literature of polite society that a bachelor gained more *cachet* if he had two discreet rooms somewhere close enough to Fifth Avenue to regard it as his nearest thoroughfare.

These rooms he obtained without difficulty. He had none of the dislike to getting the most for his money which many young men had whom he had observed upon the stage. There was a

cautious strain in his ancestry and he visited many attractive suites before he decided on what he wanted. There was a wealthy young man whose unsympathetic father insisted he should rough it on the western plains for a year as an antidote for an enervating existence in New York. These rooms were to be sublet, furniture and all, and into them without effort Horace Blackwell came. He felt it a piece of amazing luck, for he was enabled to take young Worthington's Japanese valet—a model of silence, courtesy and discretion—and start his career as a man about town within a week of leaving his home.

And so soon as his address had been determined upon he had cards engraved. One reading them would see that Mr. Horace Blackwell's addresses were Marshfield, Erie County, N. Y., and such-and-such a number Fifth Avenue. Marshfield was legitimately his. When he came to read the title deeds to his aunt's house he found it was described therein as Marshfield. That it was situate in the town of Bowlerville was information none need know.

Worthington's rooms were a little too well furnished. The criticism that the old vulgarian Gloster, of Kipling's poem, passed on his son's rooms at college could have been as well exercised on these furnished by the decadent son of a great ironmaster. At that time Blackwell had not made the discovery that he possessed naturally good taste. There were oriental hangings, for example, that Worthington had bought at great cost because he was assured they had decorated the apartments of a sultan's favorite wife. The paintings that he had most admired were of Boucher and his pink and white school of vulgar superficiality. But Blackwell did not like to banish them at first, having no standards of art from which to judge them.

The most important morning of his life dawned with no especial radiance. He was intoxicated with the ease and luxury of his life. At a time when he would formerly have been an hour in the accounting room of the Bowlerville mill, Ito brought him delicious tea and the thinnest of bread and butter and asked him at what hour the bath should be ready and what he desired for breakfast. All his life Horace had wanted pajamas of real silk and bath and dressing robes of delicate texture. They were his now and stamped with the name of a fashionable retailer. The pleasant spring breezes came stealing into his room over window boxes of bright flowers.

The touch of caution in him brought the knowledge that men about town may not indefinitely prolong an existence on twelve thousand dollars; but his money was hardly touched and the life of which he had dreamed lay before him. He had rooms on the Avenue and to them would come no pestering friends of other days. His life had always been a self-centered one. Effie Horton alone knew him well, and she was even now striving with the dull daughters of one of Buffalo's proudest families. Adventures were for the bold. If he had not possessed a faith in his destiny he might well have wondered by what path he should proceed. To take off his hat to a pleasing damsel and try to convince her they had met before was no part of his scheme. Such coarse technique savored too much of the college-boy style to suit him. And once, long ago, he had tried it and not with eminent success.

As it chanced, he had invaded New York at a time when the International Polo matches were but a few weeks distant. Polo was a game he had never seen. He knew it was society's sport, the costliest of outdoor exercises, the most splendid game in which physically fit humanity may engage. His first knowledge of it was gained by that best of polo pony stories, "The Maltese Cat," and he had seen mentions of the game from time to time where fashionable America foregathered, Newport, Lakewood, Point Judith and Narragansett Pier.

Smart America had witnessed in the preceding year a very close contest for

the International trophy and was looking forward to almost as spirited a one now. Every day the teams were engaged in practice matches and the papers informed him of the time and place. On the day he determined to see the game at first hand he found that the English team would engage in friendly rivalry one on which two Americans played, besides an English baron and a Spanish duke. The game would be on the private estate of a Westbury millionaire. At the depot a taxi took him to the ground, where he was admitted without question. For the first time in his life he was among members of Long Island's smart hunting set.

The big playing field with its white board border, the pavilion wherein men and women sat chatting, the groups of ponies and stable boys and the men in their polo kit might all have been familiar sights so far as the outward interest he took in them. At heart he was more excited than ever he had been. Here he was in the midst of the only sort of his countryfolk he desired to know, not as one who had paid admission, but a guest of the same benevolent magnate as they were.

Here and there were people of coarser clay whom he supposed to be the inevitable newspaper men, red-faced men with cigars and domestic panamas and a tendency to turn the greensward into a cuspidor. He turned aside from them impatiently and walked over to the stamping ponies, where a group of men were talking to some of the players. The grooms were chubby-faced little English lads, very trim in their bedford cords, and they touched their hats and dropped their "aitches" with equal readiness, and when he asked them told him the names of their famous charges.

Presently someone in authority called out, "Stand back there from the ponies."

A few undesirable people moved back, but the men talking to the players remained as they were. And when the man who had shouted perceived Mr. Horace Blackwell, of Marshfield, catechizing the grooms on the points of the ponies he concluded that he, too, was of the elect and permitted him to remain. This was not lost upon Horace, who from time to time strolled back to the spot and proffered a patronizing remark.

It was when he had come back from this shielded spot that he heard his name called and beheld Effie Horton beaming at him. He betrayed little pleasure at meeting her.

"What brings you here?" he demanded.

"My romantic heart," she laughed. "I could not endure Buffalo without you."

"But the real reason?" he asked.

"A chance to get a newspaper job. I'm on the woman's page of the *Evening Herald*. I was on it a year ago just before I went to Buffalo, but there was a new editor who didn't like my work—or me—and I left. Now the old one is back and sent for me. I saw you long ago, but you wouldn't leave the ponies and they wouldn't let me in. How did you get in there?"

"Just walked in," he said. "Those other men stayed, so I did, too. I had as much right as they."

"Oh, shucks!" she cried. "Listen to Horace talking! That tall man with the blond moustache is Lord Minster, who brought the team over. The one he's talking to is Mr. Harry Payne. Oh, yes, you have just as much right as they do! What team are you playing on today?"

Her bantering was rather pleasing than otherwise. He felt he had made an admirable beginning.

"How do you know what their names are?"

"I've come out here twice before to get the men's names and the women's dresses. I left Buffalo before you did. I've had my job two weeks already."

As she spoke a pretty dark woman passed them with a slight, dark man, and went toward the group about the ponies.

Horace looked at her with a very vivid interest.

To begin with, he thought he had never seen so fascinating a woman. She was above middle height, taller than the man who accompanied her, and walked with a grace and litheness that took his eye instantly. There was a spring in her steps that made her walk seem almost like a dance. She radiated an intense vitality. Her dark eyes were full of flashing colors and her laugh more musical than anything he had heard. He watched her till she was lost in the throng. Then he sighed and presently turned to Effie.

"Who is that wonderful creature?" he demanded.

Effie looked at him in silence. This was a new Horace, startled out of his calm airs of superiority into being an eager, interested man, a tinge of red coloring his usually clear pallid skin. It was the Horace, in fact, which she had often hoped to see awakened to her own charms.

"Who is she?" he repeated.

"I don't know," Effie said a little sullenly. "I can't know everybody who horns into a place like this."

"She belongs here," he said with conviction. "Effie, be sweet and find her out."

He smiled at her for another woman's sake more pleasantly than he had ever done for her own.

"That was a ravishing gown, just the thing to fill your column on the *Evening Herald.*"

"And what color was it, pray?" she asked.

"How do I know?" he returned. "I saw her face and that was all. Find out for me, Effie! Please, obstinate little redhead, tell me who she is!"

The tone, almost an endearing one, made her very bitterly disposed toward the radiant woman who had swept past her. How little men understand women, she thought, that this one should use such a tone for such a purpose. Or it might be, and this wounded her all the more, that he was utterly indifferent as to what construction she placed on his moods.

"What for?" she said. "What good will it do you? You can't know her."

"Why not?" he flung back, nettled.

She shrugged her shoulders. He should suffer, too. "What has Meadowbrook in common with Bowlerville?"

"I knew she was Meadowbrook," he cried, and passed over the slur as though its source rendered it unworthy of notice.

"I shall find out. There are other newspaper men and women here besides you." He smiled. "You're bluffing, Effie, you don't know who she is."

"I do," the girl cried. "And I know the man she is with and all about both of them."

"You'd much rather tell me yourself than for me to get it from a rival. Who are they?"

"The man's name is Wolfston Colman, one of the best poloists we ever had. Some people say it's only jealousy that keeps him from the team that's to play the Englishmen next week. He was an internationalist once."

"And her name?" he begged.

"That's Mrs. Hamilton Buxton."

"Are you sure?" he cried.

"Why shouldn't she be?"

"I thought Mrs. Hamilton Buxton was a trifle—well, notorious."

"Just a trifle," Effie returned maliciously. "I interviewed her once and I'm not likely to be wrong. Doesn't she make up well?"

He looked at her indignantly.

"She's no older than you."

Effie was paler than usual. She took out a neat little pad and produced a pencil.

"This is the first opportunity I've ever had," she said, "to interview a man who's suddenly fallen in love for the first time. I shall call it 'The Soul's Awakening.'"

He looked at her angrily. She had never seen him show such sudden passion.

"I hate red-headed women," he snapped, and turned on his heel, and

walked toward the playing field where the game was beginning.

CHAPTER III

It was that afternoon of early June when the hopes of the men who wore the red rose were dashed to the ground by the accident to their famous number two.

When a backhand blow by the hard-hitting son of the ground's owner struck the cavalryman full in the face and knocked him from his mount there was consternation among such of the spectators who guessed the possible consequence of the accident.

"What a dreadful, dreadful pity," said a musical voice that brought a thrill to Blackwell. "He was playing at the top of his form and he's such a delightful man, too, isn't he?"

The ex-internationalist to whom she spoke smiled. "I haven't your opportunity for finding out how delightful he can be, but he's the best number two they ever sent out from Hurlingham. It's a damned shame. Minster'll have to play, I suppose."

The two were standing within a few feet from Horace and utterly unconscious of his presence. Once the man glanced at him and the owner of Marshfield felt the look an unkind one. It seemed that the famous player had sensed him as one out of his element. It was a quick sudden scrutiny that ended in a half frown.

As a matter of fact, Colman hardly noticed his face. He was looking at this tall good-looking man who wore the colors of the Tenth Hussars, and wondering who he was. New York tailors had just taken to importing regimental and college colors in the form of neckties, and Horace had been attracted by a combination which informed the initiated that its owner belonged, or should belong if etiquette were observed, to that very famous regiment of King's Hussars.

As it was, Horace misconstrued the look and conceived a sudden dislike to the great horseman and an overpowering jealousy that it should be his luck to escort Mrs. Hamilton Buxton.

The niceties of the play, when it was resumed with a new man in place of the injured one, had little attraction for the lately come to New York. He could only stare at this brilliant and magnetic woman whose matrimonial adventures had come even to the attention of his aunt and merited her severe censure. She looked at him once, a cold hard scrutiny, it seemed, which seemed to confirm Colman's verdict of his social impossibility. In a sense, they looked through him and not at him. He wondered if his tailor had proved false when he declared his new customer's suits embodied the last refinements of the art sartorial. Some of the men watching the game were in riding kit; others had obviously motored up. None had clothes on so extremely new as his own. Wolfston Colman was almost carelessly dressed.

As he gazed at the man he envied he caught sight of Effie regarding him with a supercilious smile. He knew she was by way of being clever and it infuriated him to find her watching his entrance into smart society with frank and ungenerous curiosity. He turned away as he caught her glance and looked out into the field, now free of ponies, since it was one of the intervals between "chukkers."

Not many yards distant he saw the tall blond man she had told him was Lord Minster talking to a pretty woman in white and a slight dark man who looked like a Spaniard. Horace had seen her in the pavilion at the other side of the ground when he entered, and she had crossed the field for the first time. He could hear that they were discussing the lamentable accident to the Hurlingham star.

Horace felt suddenly very remote from the world wherein he wished to move. All the men and women about him seemed to have friends everywhere. They chattered and discussed one another and the finer points of the game as though life were for them—as indeed it was for the majority—a round

of pleasure. He cast his eyes on the beautiful Mrs. Buxton, who was now engrossed with a pink and white youth in smart riding kit, a youth with indeterminate features and pale hair. It was well enough that she should talk to Colman. He had made a name and was rich besides, and good looking enough, but this hateful lad with white eyelashes angered him. He was annoyed at the insistence with which the favored youth looked at him. It seemed to Horace to be a stare that said no Bowlerville representative had a right on the private field of a millionaire where polo was in progress and the aristocracies of America and Europe mixed.

The favored youth, so far from resenting Blackwell's presence, was sighing in secret that he lacked his stature and looks. This aloof stranger wearing regimental colors was probably one of the companions of the cavalry officers who had come to lift the cup.

He envied them their superb horsemanship and thought unkindly of a mother who had feared for his safety too much to let him learn the art of equitation until it was too late for him to get even a fair seat. Mrs. Hamilton Buxton followed his sober glances and rested her magnificent eyes on the stranger. He was uncommonly good looking, she thought. Half a dozen years ago, perhaps it was more, there had been a Roman prince who looked like him and had the same rather melancholy eyes and the same beautiful tapering white hands.

"Who is that man?" she asked abruptly.

"I don't know," Duff McGregor answered. "I thought you'd know. You know every good looking man and, fortunately for me, some plain ones. Perhaps he's one of these cavalry fellows. They're swarming over."

"Oh, no," she said. "One can always tell a cavalryman by his walk. He's not bred to the sabre and saddle."

Horace sensed that it was about him they talked and the knowledge brought him little pleasure. In avoiding their glances he caught sight of Effie Horton. He felt he had had enough scrutiny and stepped over the board that guarded the enclosed field to walk to the other side of the grounds.

But as he neared Lord Minster and the two to whom he talked the interval was ended and the grooms led out the ponies. There was no time to cross. He must perforce turn back and meet the unsympathetic eyes of those who judged him hardly. There had always been the dislike in his nature to make a fool of himself. Perhaps that was why his life had been tinged with a certain melancholy. He took a sudden and surprising resolve. He was abreast of the lady in white. Effie was staggered when she saw him raise his hat and address her.

"Is Captain Leslie very badly hurt?" he asked.

The lady to whom he spoke had met so much hospitality since her arrival and was besides related by marriage to several American families that she supposed this was one of the many nice young Americans she had met at a dance or a dinner, at Meadowbrook or Piping Rock, whose name she ought to remember but unfortunately could not call to mind.

"They don't know yet," she answered graciously, "but they're afraid his nose is broken. Isn't it a frightful nuisance?"

He uttered some word of conventional condolence and walked with her to the board, where he raised his hat and bowed to them both, the woman in white and the dark little man with her. That was all. But Effie had seen; and not Effie alone. Mrs. Hamilton Buxton had observed him, and this time she did not look clear through him.

Effie could not keep up her air of dignity when she wanted badly to find out how he had come to know these names already in her list of notables at a distinguished gathering.

"How did you know them?" she demanded.

"Know whom?" he repeated.

"Don't you know their names, Horace?"

"You don't," he returned with assumed calm; "you can't bluff me this time."

"She was Lady Minster and the man was the Duke of Penderosa, captain of the Madrid Polo Club. Of course I know them."

"This time you happen to be right," he admitted, and marvelled at Horace Blackwell who had been seen publicly walking with a baroness and a duke.

The baroness had smiled and the duke had raised his hat. He had no desire for Bowlerville to know. They would not understand. They would raise rude voices in raucous laughter. He knew his Bowlerville. And it had all happened because he did not want to seem a fool in having set out to cross a field too late and being compelled to turn back and meet unsympathetic glances.

Standing a little apart he saw Lady Minster greet Mrs. Buxton.

"By the way," the American woman asked, "who was that tall good looking man you were talking to just now?"

"I'm ashamed to say I've forgotten his name, and even where I met him. It was at a dance somewhere, or was it a dinner? No, I think it was at a tennis party. But I've been so splendidly entertained here and met so many charming men that I can't for the life of me remember their names."

This conversation was sufficient to establish Blackwell's eligibility in Mrs. Buxton's mind. Although men in all ranks of life bend to beggar maids—and others—they do not like their women to smile at men of inferior birth. There are lamentable stories in society of valets and men of obscure walks of life who have masqueraded sufficiently well to marry women of rank. It is true they have rarely captured buds; but full-blown flowers have occasionally yielded themselves to such suitors and so confounded high families and scandalized relatives and set lawyers to the making of new wills.

Duff McGregor presently found that Mrs. Hamilton Buxton was taking absolutely no notice of his remarks. He was not sufficiently conceited to find anything strange in this, but he thought she need not have turned the battery of those wonderful eyes on a man whom neither he nor she, nor anyone else, apparently, knew. After a time he became oppressed by the sense of his relative unimportance. He could not accuse the lady he admired of flirting like a shopgirl on a holiday at a cheap beach. She had glanced only a couple of times at the stranger and there was nothing in her gaze that might offend propriety. At least so he thought; and sighed a moment later when it occurred to him that his lack of success might be that he could not properly interpret the signs.

Presently someone told him that his mother sought him and he excused himself and walked away. Colman took his place by the lady's side and was too much interested in the fast and exciting play to talk. Until today the invaders had been matched with comparatively slow teams and their own pace was not called upon. But today they were showing speed and teamwork that made him wonder what would be the issue when they met his countrymen, whom he did not consider to be in equal physical condition.

In all his six and twenty years of life Horace Blackwell had never seen a woman who fascinated him so wholly as this magnificent brunette. She was assuredly one of those princesses of whom he had dreamed. And he cursed fate sullenly that he was placed in an environment where such women did not come. Those rooms of his on the Avenue and his discreet Togo seemed miserably lacking in space and importance when he considered how these people about him dwelt. The great mansion standing a half mile distant from the polo ground had, so Effie informed him, sixty rooms in it, and it was but one of several which the millionaire Phillips owned.

He dared not attempt with Mrs. Hamilton Buxton another such man-

euvre as he had successfully carried out with Lady Minster and the Duke.

He edged his way through the people near him and presently stood directly behind her looking down at the tendrils of curling hair that grew about her delicate ears. Once or twice she looked past him as though seeking a friend's face in the crowd. And once she allowed those splendid eyes of hers to dwell for a moment on him; he received, as it were, the end of a smile that had been thrown to a friend a few yards distant. Effie and her sneers were forgotten. There was now with him only one end in life, and that to know this adorable woman.

He had lived too much in books and dreams to have that ready wit and address which on such occasions might carry a more experienced man to the land of fleeting romance. He and she had assuredly no common acquaintances upon whom to draw. Had he been of her world this had been easy enough, but Effie's taunt came back to him. What had Meadowbrook to do with Bowlerville?

As he stood sighing at her heels she looked around again; and this time he received the beginning of a smile whose end was caught by a pretty woman passing by. He argued that she must know he was staring at her and thinking about her. And if she resented it she could annihilate him by a look. Presently she clasped her hands behind her back and he stared down at one half-closed hand. Suppose she was holding it thus so that he could slip his card into it! Then he told himself that no society woman would ever do a thing like that. A moment later he remembered the colonel's lady and Miss O'Grady.

But his desire to know her more than offset the risk he might win. In his fancy he saw himself horsewhipped by grooms, run off the field to the derision of dukes and the sneers of Long Island sportsmen for insulting a woman of position. In that moment Horace found himself possessed of a certain courage upon which there had never been the necessity to draw. It was worth the risk, he decided.

CHAPTER IV

As he slipped the engraven cardboard into those slim white hands they curled over it and their owner made no movement. The danger of assault had apparently passed away, for while holding the card she had equably answered some question of Colman's.

Her lack of action was beginning to unnerve him when, at the end of another "chukker" she turned about and looked at him as though suddenly discovering an old friend. That radiant smile he had seen wasted on others was now for him alone.

"Surely it's Mr. Blackwell," she cried. "When did you come?"

He took her hand, prayed that he was not blushing, and said he had arrived perhaps an hour before.

"Of course you know Wolfston Colman?" she remarked.

"By sight only," he returned easily as he was introduced. He was relieved to find his apprehension that everyone on the field might be watching him was a wrong one. None took the slightest notice.

"What do you think of the Hurlingham lot?" Colman demanded.

Horace had not been listening to the horseman's critical remarks for nothing.

"If our men are not trained as well as they are we shall lose the cup," he said.

Colman turned to Mrs. Buxton with rather an air of triumph. "You see? That's exactly what I said!" In which, of course, he was right.

After a few moments she dismissed Wolfston Colman with a pleasant little nod.

"I shall see you later," she assured him. "I'm simply dying for some tea."

And with Horace at her side she walked over the ground to where in their scores motors were parked. Where tea was to be found he did not

know. He was embarrassed by his ignorance.

"We'll go over to the Philipps'," she said casually. "Do you know them?"

"I've met some of them," he said guardedly.

"Have you your motor here?" she asked.

"I came over with another man in his," he returned, and made a vow that his aunt's money could be well expended in purchasing one on the morrow.

She paused by the side of a big car. "Here's my husband's. We'll use it. He'll probably be furious." The chauffeur opened the door for her. "I, too, came in another man's."

When for the first time they were free from observation she threw him another ravishing smile.

"Well," she said, "and why did you do it?"

His voice came thickly. Experience had not permitted him to do these things without effort.

"How could I help it?" he cried. "There was never anyone so adorable as you."

Mrs. Hamilton Buxton did not answer for a moment. She was far too experienced to be deceived at the gulp in his voice. A number of men she knew could do that admirably, and none of them would ever see forty again. And she admitted frankly that she was adorable. "I ought to be furiously angry with you!"

"But you are not," he said, growing courageous.

She looked at him curiously.

"That depends."

"On what?" he demanded.

"On you," she told him. "If I am disappointed in you I shall be furious."

He wondered what she meant. How many plays had he not seen and how many novels had he not read where some such remark was made by a heroine. A composite picture of such plays or books would reveal a heroine regarding a hero with a look of pained surprise. And she would say, "We have been such good friends but now, now you have spoiled it all!"

This remark was invariably made when the juvenile lead had tried to kiss her. Was Mrs. Hamilton Buxton warning him to kiss her or not to kiss her? Horace Blackwell had thick and luxuriant hair of which he was rather proud. In that moment he would have preferred a bald dome and sophistication to inexperience and waving locks. For her part the lady was not sure what to make of him. That he took so little advantage of the occasion might mean either that he was experienced or inexperienced. The motor had arrived at the Philipps' before she had been able to determine which.

He was rather pleased to find he was among a set of people who did not carry the custom of introduction to the excess usual among the Bowlerville hostesses. There, when a stranger entered a room he was introduced instantly to everyone. This was popularly supposed to put him at his ease, whereas few ordeals are more unnerving.

He saw a number of people whom he had noticed on the field, and most of the poloists were there. He was a little embarrassed when some women stared at him curiously. Two, obviously, seemed discussing him.

Said one:

"Who is that new man she's picked up?"

"No idea," the other returned, looking at him a little enviously. "Quite nice looking, don't you think?"

"I believe she advertises for them," her friend said viciously. This lady had many intimate friends who were seduced by Mrs. Hamilton Buxton's less matured charms.

"Nonsense," the other retorted, "Millicent hasn't any need for that. What she's been looking for for years is for a young man who has never loved before. Mixed education makes that very difficult, she says. They all fall in love at absurd ages on that account and are spoiled before they're seventeen."

"Her affairs are scandalous," the first speaker replied acidly. She spoke with all the bitterness that a woman who

has been an unsuccessful sinner adopts when condemning another who has not failed.

Effie had pointed her out to Horace as the Mrs. Codrington who bred, exhibited and rode her own saddle horses at the big shows. He looked at her with the respect born of her assured position. And as he looked he saw that she made a futile effort to catch the attention of a passing footman. In her hand was an emptied teacup. Instantly he advanced toward her and offered to relieve her of it.

"It would be so charming of you to get me another cup," she smiled.

When he was gone on his errand she turned to the woman at her side.

"Here's a splendid opportunity to find out all about him," she whispered. "Melt into the landscape, dear, when he comes back, and I'll introduce him to you later."

"I wondered why you wanted that second cup," her friend smiled.

"So you came with Millicent?" Mrs. Codrington asked when he found himself sitting at her side.

"What Millicent?" he demanded guardedly.

"Millicent Buxton, of course."

So her name was Millicent. He felt the need of circumspection among these people.

"Yes," he admitted.

"She is one of my dearest friends," Mrs. Codrington told him. "School girls together and sister bridesmaids at all sort of matrimonial farces. Curious I've never met you before if you know her so well. We know the same people as a rule."

"New York is a big city," he said a trifle heavily.

"Not the New York *we* know," she corrected. It seemed to her that he was not anxious to inform her of himself or his acquaintance with Millicent Buxton.

"I am not often in New York," he said quietly, "but often enough to have seen you at the Horse Show."

"You're keen on horses then?" she demanded, her eyes lighting.

He remembered he was in the midst of the famous Long Island hunting set and must be circumspect.

"Naturally," he answered, "I came out to see the ponies as well as the men who played them."

"You must come and see my stable some day," she said graciously. There was no doubt but he was exceedingly good looking and his manners were refreshing after those of the men she usually met. That he must be socially secure was vouched for by his knowledge of Mrs. Hamilton Buxton. There had always been rivalry between these two women for the men they liked, and the victory had almost always been to Hamilton Buxton's wife. This new man probably rode well enough to appreciate her superb seat; and, too, there were pleasant leafy bridle paths around her residence where she had spent many happy hours of flirtation.

"Do you know him?" she asked, indicating a big blond man who smiled at her in passing and stopped a moment later to talk to Millicent.

"I rarely remember names," Horace returned. He felt it would be awkward to pose as one entirely new to the people about him. "Who is he?"

She looked at him with a smile.

"How delightfully discreet you must be. Discreet men are so rare."

He observed that the big blond man was talking almost angrily to the woman who filled his thoughts. And it seemed that they spoke of him. None but a husband would scowl at a woman like Mllicent Buxton in a crowd like this. He drew his bow at a venture.

"I prefer his wife," he said easily.

"It's quite impossible to be a friend of them both," she declared. "He is so dreadfully violent at times, but I rather like Hamilton."

Her plans to ask him to call and see her horses were shattered when the man, whose name she did not even know, arose at an imperious gesture from Millicent and left her with a mere word of apology.

"Do you know Ella Codrington

well?" Mrs. Hamilton Buxton demanded of him.

"I have spoken perhaps a hundred words to her," he answered. There was something rather abrupt and disconcerting in her manner.

"Have you accepted her invitation to ride in the country lanes with her?"

"I wasn't asked," he said mildly.

"You would have been if you'd spoken a dozen words more. I know Ella rather well. In my acquaintance with women I always begin with a little suspicion and increase it as I know them more."

"She said you were one of her dearest friends," he told her.

"She knows more about me than I do about myself," said Mrs. Hamilton Buxton. "Ella always cultivates the discarded lovers of the women she hates. One can pick up a great deal of inside information that way." She looked at him rather coldly. "By the way, I'm looking for information myself."

He concealed the uneasiness he experienced. There was no doubt in his mind her remark had to do with himself and his fitness for his present surroundings.

"It's hot in here," he asserted. "Come outside and talk there."

"Mr. Blackwell," she said gravely, "I am rarely indiscreet unless I've planned to be. I'm only moved by impulses when I want to be. Of course you know what I mean?"

CHAPTER V

It was perhaps the most gratifying moment of Horace Blackwell's life to find himself wholly at his ease. Here he was set in a most unsuitable gathering; men and women of the world he had dreamed of for years were about him and he seemed to be accepted without question. It was not unlikely that he might be ejected as an interloper by liveried servants. And yet he felt no nervousness. He looked into the lovely face of the woman at his side and smiled. He was not yet aware that his rare smile rendered him singularly handsome.

"If you want me to regret anything I'm afraid I shall have to disappoint you, Mrs. Buxton."

"I want to find out some common acquaintance," she declared. "People have asked me who you were and I haven't known what to say. My husband was almost unpleasant about it. I hoped you were one of Ella Codrington's men, although as a rule I'm not so charitable as that, but you tell me you don't know her. Whom do you know here?"

"The only one I want to," he said steadily, "you."

"That, I suppose, is the obvious answer," she said, "but it doesn't help me."

"You mean that I ought not to have come here knowing nobody?"

"Of course," she said impatiently. "We all know one another here. Just now all these English cavalrymen have enlarged the circle, but we know them in England, so that's all right. I thought you were a friend of theirs. You spoke to Lady Minster and I supposed you knew the Philipps, too."

"So you're afraid I'm a burglar?"

"This house would be a treasure trove for you if you were. No, I don't think you are a criminal, Mr. Blackwell."

"You know I'm not," he said quickly. "If you are a woman you must see exactly how it happened. Directly I set eyes on you I saw you were the only woman in the world." His voice came thickly. "I wish I could tell you how lovely you are. I've always dreamed of meeting just such a woman as you. It was because of the hope I might that I have never bothered with girls. I knew that some day—"

He broke off almost in despair. His words seemed so inadequate a translation of the emotions that surged up in him. And he feared, too, that he was making himself ludicrous in the eyes of a woman of the world.

"Are you always such a passionate pilgrim as this?" she said, smiling.

He looked at her with the tortured eyes that faithful dogs bend on loved owners when they are punished.

"You are laughing at me," he cried.

"One always does that, unless one knows a man is sincere," she answered. "It's a method of protection, and you must remember that the truth is never so convincing as a lie."

"I have no right to be here," he said dully. "I'm going, but you know now why I did what I did."

"You mean that you fell in love with me at sight?"

"Is that so wonderful?" he returned.

"With us love is always a matter of design not accident. No, don't go yet," she added when he rose. "Love is a fascinating subject and one can never study it closely enough. I have always thought that the proper way for two people to approach it would be for one to have experience and the other enthusiasm. Which do you bring?"

"I have never loved a woman until I met you," he whispered.

"Then your part must be enthusiasm," she said, looking at him with her magnificent eyes, "and mine experience. Why do you frown?"

"Because I think of the men who have loved you, and the men you have loved."

"That will prevent me from being dull," she laughed. "The only time I feel sorry for my husband is when I think of the gaucheries of my first love and its absurdities."

She paused a moment and looked at him through long lashes.

"I wonder if you will ever tell that to Ella Codrington?"

For a moment he did not answer. He did not know what she meant him to understand by such a reference. She had declared that Mrs. Codrington sought out her discarded lovers. Was he to be of this number?"

Curiously enough, he was conscious of an inability to regard this meeting with Millicent Buxton with the *sang froid* he had pictured when, in his fancy of other days, he had enacted similar scenes. He had longed to sin splendidly in Fifth Avenue. He had hoped to dominate women of the world with his wit and cynical self-possession. Instead he found his heart pounding madly and his brain aflame with jealousy at the knowledge that Mrs. Hamilton Buxton was admittedly experienced in the arts of love.

It was fortunate that he did not convey this impression. Used to a world where passion was unchecked although divorce was rare, Millicent Buxton was not able to believe that he had found in her a first love. She was not taken with his wit; she was susceptible to his good looks. It was because Blackwell had never thought of himself as strikingly handsome that he had none of those intolerable airs that good-looking men usually assume. He had aimed at being a man of the world, whereas his only social asset was his deportment and figure and the splendid melancholy of his fine eyes.

"I shall never think of her again," he declared.

"She deserves pity," the other asserted. "Imagine a woman whose husband finds out all her little affairs and forgives her in public!"

"I wish you'd forgive me," he said softly.

"You must be punished first," she retorted. "You are condemned to entertain me on my way back to New York."

"Do you mean it?" he cried.

"If it can be arranged," she said slowly. "What a pity you haven't a motor."

"I'll get one tomorrow," he answered eagerly.

"My husband will most certainly want his if he thinks I'm likely to ride to town with you. We've heaps of others, but they're in use or the chauffeur's mother is dying or something is wrong with the machinery."

"Couldn't I phone for a taxi?" he asked.

"And ruin this darling gown? One can't ride in those dreadful things unless forced into them. One of the Philipps boys will arrange it. They

have dozens of them. I'm dining in town—our house is still open—so nobody will think we have eloped."

She leaned forward and called to Duff McGregor, who was sitting lonely a few yards distant.

"Dear Duff," she said when he was at her side, "be a sweet child and motor back to New York without me. I want a convenient excuse."

Blackwell saw the lad color, bow in obedience to her command, and disappear.

"Do you manage all men as easily as that?" he asked.

"Generally," she told him. "As a rule they like it. I am living in the hope of meeting a man who will make me enjoy being ordered about. Sometimes love comes at the bidding of scourges."

"What a horrible idea," he said hotly. "Love is not like that."

"Is this enthusiasm speaking or experience?" she demanded.

"Conviction," he answered. "I love you and I could never hurt you."

"Then you'll suffer," she returned, "and you must reckon on the fact that we sometimes like to be hurt. A woman can only love a man truly who has the power to make her suffer."

"I wish you were not so hard," he said wistfully.

"I'm not—always," she answered. "In fact, I'm rarely *really* hard. What you are objecting to is only flippancy which is another name for the armour we wear to conceal our hurts. Sometimes, dear child, I'm all melting tenderness and filled with the desire to recapture the sentimental couplets that I mouthed when I was really *ingénue*."

"That was before you were married," he said soberly, recalling the angry face of Hamilton Buxton.

"And sometimes after," she flashed back at him. "Marriage only ends the capacity for loving one's husband. It is the gateway of love and opens one's eyes to much more entrancing prospects. Have you ever been in Rome?"

He shook his head.

"I've never been abroad. Why?"

"It was in Rome that I last melted into the sentimental. There was a man there—a prince of a great house—and I think I loved him more than anyone I ever met."

"I hate to hear you say that," he cried. "I can't bear to think of him."

"And yet but for him you would never be sitting here with me. Except that you are taller you are strangely like him. He had that slow smile and the unhurried way with him that you have." Suddenly she touched his hands lightly. "Have you any idea what beautiful hands you have? Yours are like his. When I saw you today watching the polo I was startled. That was why I stared at you. That was why I spoke. You have the same profile."

He could see that the remembrance of this other man moved her deeply. She looked into the distance, seeing nothing, her thoughts a thousand leagues away from him.

"What days of flame they were," she sighed. "The scent of crushed flowers always comes back to me when I think of him. Hamilton took me to Italy soon after we were married and my prince and I used to follow the foxhounds over the Campagna and lose our way and come riding back in the gloaming to see St. Peter's rising out of the mist."

"I can see he had the power to make you suffer," Blackwell said presently when she had finished and was silent.

"It was part of my education," she answered with a shrug of the shoulders. "You are probably a better man than he, but when did we women go seeking manly virtues?"

He looked at her magnificent beauty, her exquisite coloring, her entrancing vitality and then fell to thinking of the day when these must fade.

"There'll be an end to that sort of education some day," he reminded her.

"The creeping years and so on? Of course. When I can't be loved by men I shall try and be feared by women."

Suddenly she rose to her feet.

"I've changed my mind," she said. "I shall motor home alone. You've

started me thinking about my Roman. You would make the unwelcome third."

He made a gesture of despair. It seemed that he had won his paradise only to be turned from it.

"What is it, tragic child?" she demanded.

"How can I ever see you again?" he asked.

"I shall think it over," she told him. "By tomorrow I may have returned from my flight into Italy."

"How does that help me?" he inquired anxiously.

"I can't tell yet. Please don't do anything so splendidly heroic as to call. For some reason or other Mr. Buxton has taken a great dislike to you, and he is so socially secure as to indulge in acts of violence at times. He is horribly strong. At Yale he won boxing championships and consorted with pugilists."

"I'd risk that if I could see you," Horace cried with a child's eagerness.

"But I wouldn't risk ridicule," she smiled, "and no man can be thrashed by Hamilton and retain his dignity."

"Then this is the end?" he said despairingly.

"Or the beginning," she retorted.

"I wish I knew what you meant," he cried.

"Do you suppose," she said in a lower voice, "that I should have taken all the trouble to talk to you and cut the man I was supposed to meet here if I thought this was to be the end? Don't you remember that I said I was only moved by impulse when I wanted to be?"

With that she left him and was lost in the crowd. For almost an hour he sat in a chair on the terrace and thought about her. It was an incredible adventure even if it shattered the dreams he had cherished about his own *savoir vivre*. So far in life he had taken no thought about any emotions but his own. Many girls had made their timid offers of friendship, and even love, to be repulsed because they were not of the high world he coveted. He remembered Effie in particular. Because of a summer day when he had thawed from his customary aloofness she had taken his new interest to be something deeper. And when she stammeringly betrayed herself, he had found himself possessed of a certain contempt for so uncontrolled an emotion.

CHAPTER VI

Now a new man was born in him. An attitude of humility had come. He had thought of himself in those long years of waiting as one to whom beautiful women would minister. Now he found himself anxious to prove his affection.

Visions of the knightly days that were gone brought back with them memories of the chivalrous tasks that knights set themselves to perform for the glory of their ladies. He wished he were physically apt enough to chastise the bully, Hamilton Buxton. He staged a dozen scenes in his mind where he thrashed Buxton and foreign noblemen, especially Roman princes, and won adoration from Millicent's eyes.

He was forced to banish such pleasing fancies when he saw that most of the guests were leaving. In the great hall most of them were shaking the hands of a kindly lady whom he supposed to be his hostess. And as he hesitated what course to pursue he saw Effie, notebook in hand, standing in the outer hall.

The sight spurred him to bow over the lady's hand and murmur a conventional phrase. Assuming him to be one of her son's friends and harbouring no suspicion as to his good faith, she smiled at him.

Effie's pattering feet overtook him half way down the drive. He looked at her kindly. For the first time he felt he understood her. They were fellow worshippers, although their shrines were different.

"Horace Blackwell," she gasped, "what's come over you?"

"What do you mean?" he returned, gratified at perceiving that her sneering manner was gone.

"How is it you're hobnobbing with the Social Register in a house like that?"

"Was I ever one to be satisfied with Bowlerville?" he retorted.

"I suppose I shan't see you any more," she said a little wistfully.

"I'll call and take you out to dinner some night."

"I wish you'd come and have dinner with me down at the Village tomorrow," she urged. "A lot of us, painters, poets and writers, meet at the Red Lion Inn. Some of the brightest intellects in the city."

"Village?" he queried.

"Greenwich," she told him. "New York's Latin Quarter."

She gave him her address and telephone number. He was not enthusiastic about the prospect. He had always doubted the social qualifications of people who consumed new born wine and made sketches on tablecloths.

Horace was relieved from discovering his ignorance as to the fashionable makes of automobiles. The admirable Togo had a cousin of vast mechanical ability whose temporary avocation was that of a chauffeur. At Sato's suggestion Horace purchased second-hand a very handsome car for three thousand dollars, saving thereby almost an equal sum. There was a coat of arms on it, surmounted by a coronet, which added much to the value of the machine in its new owner's eyes.

To step from a fashionable store into the car's luxurious depths and whirl along the avenue in which he had his rooms was an entrancing occupation. A dozen times during this first afternoon of his ownership Horace passed and repassed the Buxton mansion opposite the Metropolitan Museum. There were motors coming and going constantly. Once he thought he saw Millicent, but found it was another woman of her height and colouring. The only moment in which he felt able to gratify Sato's expectations of him was when a coach-and-four came out of an entrance to the Park and he saw Ella Codrington ribbons in hand. She bowed to him brightly. He wished he were certain that Sato saw.

At seven he called for Effie. It was her tragedy that he never noticed what she wore or the style in which her hair was done. She jumped into the big car, thinking he had hired a taxicab. It was a moment of disappointment, but one atoned for when she discovered silver fittings graved with coronets and coats of arms. Her exclamations of astonishment and gratification were not finished when they drew up at the Red Lion Inn. For the time it was a favorite resort of the villagers. It was said that at times people of talent had been seen within its portals.

Horace frankly disapproved of the men and women he met. That he did not understand their art jargon and literary small talk gave him no sense of inferiority. The only man among them who was well dressed turned out to be in "the advertising" and therefore barely tolerated by those who hoped some day to sell stories. And the only woman who did not seem to him hopelessly vulgar was Effie. A woman on his right, a newspaper woman, Effie whispered, talked birth control at him most of the time, and said she was writing a book of sonnets on free love. She had taken too much of the chemical compound which masqueraded as wine and leaned against him heavily.

The only bright spot in the evening was the evident respect of the advertising gentleman, who, it seems, had enquired of Sato whose car he tended, and shaped his diplomacy accordingly. He was rewarded with a ride to his Harlem home in a coronetted limousine.

When he had been set down Horace turned on Effie with disapproval in his voice.

"How on earth did you get in with such a bunch as that?"

"I like them," she returned stoutly. "I'm only a working woman, remember, and it helps me to mix with them."

"Don't ask me to meet them again," he cautioned her.

"They are as good as you and me," she retorted.

"Nonsense," he snapped. "If I were content with the things they like I should be as good as they, but I'm not. You know I was never like the other people in Bowlerville, Effie. They are not half as good as you are, either."

"Do you know that's the first nice thing you've said to me for years, Horace?"

"Is it?" he said, smiling. "Then let me tell you something else. You were by far the prettiest woman in the place tonight."

"You wouldn't have said that about me yesterday afternoon," she pouted.

"It wouldn't have been true," he said brutally. "There's something about those women in that Long Island set that is like strong wine to me. They go everywhere, know everybody, do everything. They have that perfect poise that an aristocracy alone possesses. That crowd tonight was a mass of affectation, boasting of what it had published or painted or was going to. The people over there at Westbury had nothing of that."

"They don't have to be," Effie cried; "they have everything."

"That's exactly what I mean," he said. "I like people who have everything."

That the girl was silent and almost sulky as they drove to her lodging did not worry him at all. He did not notice it.

Although he went out to Meadowbrook to the Polo International Matches he was not able to get a word with Millicent Buxton. On both occasions he caught a glimpse of her in a box, but she was surrounded by those of her own set and if she saw him gave him no sign of it.

He was depressed at the thought she had finished with him. Through long sleepless night hours he asked himself what he had done or said to bring this about. Once he called up her residence on the telephone and succeeded only in getting a servant, who demanded first his name and business ere he could be connected with members of the family. Not caring to do this for fear Mrs. Buxton might be angry, and cursing himself for his lack of courage, he hung up the instrument.

Togo's nightly desire that he might honorably condescend to take rest was rarely fulfilled. Almost a month had gone by since the memorable day when he had met Mrs. Buxton, and he despaired of meeting her again. Effie, seeing him one day, was shocked at his pallor.

Then came the unexpected telegram. "I am coming to see you tomorrow afternoon." It was signed with the word, wholly incomprehensible to him, "Chisola." It was with an absolute certainty that it was from Millicent Buxton that set him to feverish preparations for her reception.

CHAPTER VII

Togo had different ideas as to floral decoration from his employer. Horace was for masses of orchids. Togo for a few simple flowers skilfully placed. In the end the masses won, and young Worthington would hardly have known his rooms.

It was at about five that Mrs. Hamilton Buxton came. He noted with unhappiness that her manner was less affable than he had hoped to see. It seemed hardly possible that this was the same woman who had whispered such meaning words to him at the Philipps house.

"What amazing indiscretion to take rooms directly opposite a club," she said, looking from the window. "Don't you know the club across the way is called the 'Gossips'?"

"I took these rooms from another man," he explained.

"Teddy Worthington was different," she commented. "He used to boast so much of his conquests that nobody believed him, so he took rooms opposite the Gossips, who confirmed his every impropriety."

"They haven't any of mine to gloat over," he said, a little hurt at her manner.

"I wonder?" she said, looking at him.

By this time Togo had removed the tea equipage and closed the door softly behind him.

"You need not," he returned, "you're the first woman who has come to see me." He glanced at her curiously. "Why should you wonder?"

He was standing at her side as he said it. She rose to her feet and turned to him and put her two hands on his shoulders.

"Do you think I want to share you with other women?" she asked.

When it grew dark they motored far into the country, returning to his rooms for the supper Togo had been bidden to prepare.

In the days of almost incredible happiness that followed Horace discovered in Millicent Buxton a thousand entrancing charms. He had feared her bitter careless tongu but found her instead a creature of infinite gentleness. That his money was dwindling brought him unhappy speculations as to the future. Without money it would be impossible to see her. And the little presents he delighted to offer were far too costly for his means.

And of late he had lost money at cards. Millicent had insisted that Duff McGregor should call upon him so as to be able to introduce him as an acquaintance of his own if the need arose. To a little club, used almost wholly for gambling, McGregor had taken him with results that were disastrous. He had no card sense and he played with men who had trained their natural aptness to an expert skill that seemed uncanny to the visitor.

"You've been losing money lately, Duff tells me," Millicent said one day. "Much money?"

"More than I can afford," he admitted.

"By the way, what money have you?" she demanded.

He flushed when he confessed his poor means.

"You can always draw on me if you want any," she said carelessly.

"Draw on you?" he repeated.

"Yes, dear simpleton," she answered. "Surely that's not unheard of?"

"A man can't accept money from a woman like that," he cried.

"They do," she said drily. "Ella Codrington has to deal in horses to supply her men with money. Inconsiderately her husband has cut her allowance."

"Do you think I'm like that?" he asked, reproach in his tone.

"Do you want me to think you better or worse?"

"Different, different," he cried vehemently. "I'm not asking to be thought better."

"I'm afraid I'm not a very good guide to right conduct either for women or men," she yawned. "If you are hard up take my money. It's my own fortune, not Hamilton's."

"It wouldn't be right," he said sententiously.

"If you knew how dull you are when you moralize," she frowned, "you would never utter another platitude. Your ideas of right and wrong aren't a bit interesting. You're perfectly adorable in some ways, dearest of boys, but unfortunately you don't yet know when."

He put his arm about her and kissed her.

"Yes, I do," he whispered.

She clung to him for a long while without speaking. He sensed that there was something that had gone wrong with her today, some one of the many domestic scenes of which she had occasionally hinted.

"Hamilton's been telling his mother about you and me," she said presently. "Old Mrs. Buxton's one dread is that we should divorce and so separate the family fortunes. His mother thinks you are one of the fascinating young dancing men who are such boons to women of the middle classes and can be hired at so much per dance. I told her you were a harmless poet and that I knew you as a Roman prince in another incarnation."

"I hate that man," he said, frowning. "Can't you ever think of me as *me*

and not as this prince of yours. I am always reminding you of him."

"Another may remind me of you," she said, smiling.

"I hate to hear you calmly discussing such things as that. Are all women as brutal? Why do you always laugh when I tell you I shall always love you?"

"Because I don't want to be loved by one man forever any more than I want to love one man for eternity. I'm afraid you've been misled about love by the more popular poets like Tennyson, who typifies it as eternal affection."

"If you cared for me really you wouldn't say that," he cried, wounded at her levity.

He had been aware of late that she was not as contented in his company as she had been at first. Several times she had failed to keep appointments or had allowed him to wait hours for her and had never offered an excuse that seemed reasonable. She had often hinted that her husband's unreasoning dislike of him might terminate their friendship. And now it seemed they had mentioned him at a family council.

"You don't care for me as you did," he said dolefully.

"I am not sure that I care for anyone," she retorted, and smiled to take away the sting of her words. "It may be that I am laying fragrant memories away so as to take them out when I am old and need comforting."

"Do you make fun of everything?" he asked.

"No," she said in a graver tone, "I only sneer at what I can't have—or perhaps at what I have lost."

"I'm sure you have been unhappier than you let me guess," he said.

"I began wrong," she said slowly. "I married wrong. I might have been different if I'd met you years ago in Rome instead of my prince. I wish you had known me then, dear. I've altered since that time. I've coarsened for one thing. Partly my own fault, partly the fault of the men I met and most of all my husband's fault."

He realized with bitterness his sense of impotence in dealing with a woman of Millicent's type. His love for her brought him no ability to guide or help her. If only he had been the man he once thought himself to be he might have understood. As it was he felt a blundering child.

"A woman without children," she went on, "often tells herself that she would have been a great success if she'd had any. Nearly always she lies."

She looked up at him with a smile and put her arm almost caressingly on his hand.

"Hasn't anything warned you that there must be an end of this?"

"Some day, perhaps," he cried, "but not yet."

"This is the last time I shall come and see you. There was a dreadful scene at luncheon today. It seems Hamilton has found out all there is to know about you and he can't forgive you."

"But I've done nothing," he said quickly.

"That's why," she retorted. "Hamilton has not done you the honor to be jealous. He is simply annoyed that his wife should have been talked about with someone employed in a humble capacity in one of his own mills."

"His mill?" Horace gasped.

"He owns it, I'm told. Surely you knew if you were there?"

"It was owned by a New York estate, but I had nothing to do with that part of the bookkeeping."

"He said he'd have forgiven me if you'd been an international crook or something exciting like that, but he couldn't stomach a bookkeeper."

He looked at her reproachfully.

"Can't one be decent and be a bookkeeper?"

"Hamilton doesn't demand decency," she explained. "It would rather bore him than otherwise. Don't you see this isn't a moral question at all but simply one of wounded vanity?"

"And with you, too?"

"With me," she explained, "it is the matter merely of a yachting trip. My father's yacht sails for the land of the

midnight sun tomorrow night. The family in council today decreed that I should go. Kismet."

She drew his face down to her and kissed him.

"You're a nice boy," she whispered, "a sort of white moth boy who longs to fly into the sunshine and think it a flame. I've been kinder to you than you will ever guess. You've deceived me twice. Once when I thought you clever and again when I thought you a fool." She sighed. "I wish I were as young in soul and emotional experience as you are; I wish I had the chance to start everything at the beginning as you have."

"This is the end," he said tragically.

"What a child you are," she answered.

"I might have been till I met you," he retorted, "but I'm not now. I've never loved anyone else and I thought you cared for me."

"I did," she declared sincerely, "I do still and I shall have all the happier memories of you because I go before we grow weary of one another."

"May I write to you?" he begged.

"Not a line," she said firmly. "This is the end of a chapter. There are new ones ahead for you and me but there's a different heroine in yours and a new hero for me. Don't be tragic about it. I'm sorry to have to go. I shall sit on deck and think of you and long to be back hearing your dear voice telling me all the sweet things about myself that I wish were true. But I tell you the chapter's at an end."

"Are you thinking of the new one?" he asked bitterly.

"On my honor not yet," she said. "There'll be a dull blank page between the two."

She rose from her chair and put her arms about his neck. He felt her warm kisses on his lips long after she had left.

CHAPTER VIII

Duff McGregor, making one of his infrequent visits, found Horace white-faced and haggard sitting by the window. He had called on the stranger to New York in the first place because Millicent Buxton had commanded him so to do. As time passed he grew to like the man. There was a certain dignity and charm in Blackwell's manner that was not without its attraction. Tonight he had called because he was in town and alone. The season was far advanced and few remained of the men he knew.

"Come out and dine somewhere," he said when he had learned the other had not yet eaten dinner.

"I feel I never want to eat again," Horace said miserably. He felt that the foundations of his whole existence were cut away from under him.

"What's happened?" McGregor demanded.

"She's going away tomorrow. I shall never see her again."

"I knew she was going," McGregor returned, "her father has one of the finest yachts afloat."

"It's quite a sudden move," Horace insisted, "she didn't know herself until today."

"It was in the papers a week ago," McGregor corrected. "She generally goes away about now."

Horace did not answer. So it was not a sudden exigency that took her from him but a planned move. She had lied to him. She had tired of him. She was setting out on new adventures leaving him bankrupt no less in money than emotions.

That his extravagance had brought him almost to the end of his resources did not immediately worry him. He repeated a hundred times to himself that she had deceived him. If it had not been for his visitor's restraining presence he could have wept with ease.

And it was because he knew McGregor would look at him curiously when the room was better lighted he pulled himself together so well that the other was almost disappointed to find not a broken man he expected but one almost normal.

Togo was commanded to bring cham-

pagne. A stock had been laid in since he was under the impression it was the usual drink of society and he supposed Millicent would expect it of him. She drank none of it. McGregor, dry and dust-filled from a long motor trip, welcomed it. It affected him little. It induced remarkable recklessness in his host. Under its influence he found a certain humor in his approach to poverty.

"I have three hundred and forty dollars," he said, and exhibited the amount, "and an automobile whose sale will about pay my debts."

"I can lend you some if you want it," McGregor told him.

"I'm going to win tonight," Horace declared, "I've lost enough at that club of yours. Luck has got to change some time."

"Don't be a fool," McGregor counselled, "you always lose. Come out for a spin in the car and then go to bed and get some sleep."

They went to the little select gambling club instead. If it had been known that Blackwell had so small a stake he would not have been welcomed. But he had an air of wealth and the man who vouched for him was a millionaire.

He played with small amounts for a little and then, resenting McGregor's insistence that he should leave, left his sponsor and sat down to drink with a group of men he had never seen before.

Later on in the evening he realized that he was a wit and at last appreciated. The men found what he said of so much interest that they hung on his words. He was telling them of what he knew of the inside of smart society. He used great names with an intimate ease that produced a deep impression. All the small talk that Millicent had made about her friends was rehashed for the benefit of this unknown group.

To McGregor, an unwilling listener, there seemed something tragic in the whole thing. As a plain, unattractive man he immensely admired Blackwell for his physical perfection and the natural dignity that was his. He had envied him more than another might know, his friendship with Millicent Buxton. And now under the unaccustomed stimulus of drink the man who had loved her was delighting these strangers with accounts of her doings and sayings, telling them things that should have remained inviolably secret.

A club steward at his request called Blackwell to the telephone.

"Nobody wants you," McGregor hissed at him. "I only want to get you away from those men. Can't you pull yourself together and be decent? Can't you try and be the gentleman you pretend to be?"

"What's the trouble?" Horace demanded with the seriousness of the man whose wit is beclouded with alcohol. "What have I done to you?"

"You are talking about the women you profess to love to a group of men who may blackmail her on account of it for all I can tell."

Horace put his hand to a throbbing head. All the exhilaration had gone from him.

"I do love her," he protested, "you know I do. I was telling them I did."

"Then leave that gang and lose your damned money at some game or another. They won't let you chatter like a fool in there."

McGregor steered him to one of the card rooms. Then he left. It was the end of his acquaintance with Horace Blackwell.

For this one night of his life blind luck followed him. He knew too little of cards to be interested in them, but the roulette table fascinated him. Here everything he bet on won, it seemed. There were piles of notes before him. People proffered him affectionate friendships but he was suddenly filled with disgust at them. One man whispered to him something about what he could buy for Millicent now. The name from foul lips infuriated him and he struck at the man savagely and cut his face. They were almost instantly separated. It was actually the first blow that Blackwell had ever struck in

anger, but it possibly saved him from unpleasant company. Some who had witnessed his winnings and realized that his condition rendered relieving him of the money an easy matter hesitated now when they saw his ugly mood. For all they knew he might be armed.

Outside a girl spoke to him. What she said he did not know. He was striding along on another planet thinking other thoughts than the earth-born. For a time she walked by his side. When he turned into Fifth avenue she fell back. It was raining slightly and there were people abroad. He paused to put on the light coat he carried over his arm. When it fell to the sidewalk he found that it eluded his efforts to pick it up. When he stooped dizziness made him stagger. In the end he let it lie there. His mood was one of splendid recklessness. Someone would find it and make use of it.

Togo was not without experience in the ways of bachelors. He mixed a draught that should induce slumber and alleviate some of the headache that would come on the morrow and put his master to bed.

CHAPTER IX

Horace did not get up until midday. His memories of what had happened were of a nebulous nature. He called to mind a disagreement with McGregor. His head told him he must have drunk enormously. And his emptied pockets told him that if he won another had the spending of his prize.

Togo added to his burdens by bringing a sheaf of bills which must be met. He had not the opportunity of evasion which men had whose financial position was secure. And as Togo received a commission on all goods paid for, he urged prompt settlement.

Sato had found a customer for the car who would take chauffeur as well. When Horace had made laborious calculations he discovered that if this were done and his bills met he would be left with less than a hundred dollars. He had wasted more in a few weeks than he had earned in his life. He fell into a mood of black despair to be aroused by the entrance of Togo, who betrayed an uncommon agitation.

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir," he said.

"Send them away," he snapped. "I won't see anyone."

"You'll see us," a harsh voice said.

Horace turned his aching head to look into the sneering face of Hamilton Buxton. Although Buxton was a heavy drinker and the victim of fashionable vices, his out-of-door life saved him from the effects of dissipation in a measure. He towered square, strong and forbidding over the man in the dressing gown. With him was a friend whom Horace had seen at the polo games, one Robert Cowley, socially elect and, it was rumored, once a warm admirer of Millicent Buxton.

"What do you want?" Horace demanded.

Buxton glanced at Togo.

"A private conversation here or wherever you like."

"Now," he began, when the servant had gone, "I am going to give you the opportunity to deny a rumor which reached me this morning that you made Mrs. Hamilton Buxton the subject of your conversation at a club last night."

In a flash the whole damnable incident came back. That was why Duff McGregor had quarrelled with him. He felt himself flushing with shame at the recollection.

"I don't remember," he said lamely.

"You mean you're afraid to admit it. Fortunately I have witnesses enough."

"Get it over quickly," Cowley broke in, "tell him you've come to thrash him, "the damned coarse-bred impostor."

It was not so much the dread of a beating that made Horace sink into his chair. It was the acid, contemptuous looks that both men bent upon him. The men of the set he had wanted to win all seemed to despise him. There was the caste idea as firmly fixed with them as in Europe. And that he should

be justly brought to book through his drunken babble of a woman who still filled his thoughts made defense impossible. Of course she would learn of it, Buxton would take care of that, and she would feel he did not deserve a kindly thought. In that moment he felt a punishment would be a grateful thing to receive. Dimly he hoped it would help to atone for what indiscretions drink had led him to commit.

"Do you deny it?" Buxton demanded.

"I wish I could," he said.

"That wouldn't help you," the other snapped, "I've had it in my mind to do this for a long while."

"It wasn't for that I wished I could deny it," Horace said, "it was because—" He broke off impatiently as he realized they would never understand what he meant. Gross libertines both and they came as avengers of women!

There was no resistance that a man of Blackwell's athletic skill could make effectively against one of Buxton's type. He was beaten with a walking cane to the contemptuous and derisive comments of Cowley. And when his assailant was tired and had flung him to the floor with a crash he lay there feeling no bitterness was left for him to taste.

Alas, that Togo should have been a timorous Jap. One would like to have found him a valorous disciple of Bushido, proficient at jiu-jitsu, a little slim hero from the Orient willing to array himself against men of an alien culture for the loyalty he bore his employer. Togo entrenched himself in his pantry until he was assured the visitors had gone.

Blackwell was sitting in the same deep chair by the window when Togo stole timidly into the room. There was a cut over his eye where he had been hurled against a table leg. He would not answer the man's questions. He waved him from the room and sat there hour after hour. He was not able to decide what he had better do with the life that was left.

It was borne in upon him that Millicent had never cared for him as he once thought she did. He was an experiment for her and not a very successful one. His venture had been a failure. He knew now that it was not only lack of money that would doom him to failure. It was that he would always be an outsider in the society to which he had aspired, to which he felt himself akin but could never hope to reach. The pain of his bruised back was almost forgotten in his mental agony of depression. He was alone. None understood or cared for him.

When he heard light footsteps in the room he supposed they were those of his valet. He did not look around. But it was Effie, shining-eyed and tremulous, who came to his side. Togo, fearing his moody silence, had telephoned that his master was in dire distress.

He looked at her with a grim smile.

"You!" he cried, "come to tell me you know it would happen?"

"Why do you always like to hurt me?" she cried.

"Do I?" he answered more gently. "I didn't mean to, Effie."

She bathed his wounded face in silence. Her touch was like balm to him. He took one of her cool hands and pressed it.

"I believe I have one friend left," he said.

He was very grateful to her for asking no questions. Her presence brought back to him some ancient memories that soothed him in his black moment.

"You were the first girl I ever kissed," he said presently.

"I wish I were the last," she murmured.

"What a mess I've made of things," he commented later. "Do you realize that I'm penniless?"

He told her how his affairs stood. There was nothing left him but to go back to Bowlerville and occupy part of the house that his aunt left him. What he would prefer to do, he confided, would be to go as far away from New York as possible. Oregon for

choice and buy a ranch in the fruit zone. It would not need much, a few thousand dollars to begin with.

"And I think I'd ask you to go with me, Effie," he said. There was for the first time in their relations a certain timidity in his next question. "Would you have gone?"

"We both shall go," she cried, her eyes gleaming with an excitement he could not understand. "Wait a moment."

She darted into the hall to return with a silk-lined coat. It was the one he had left lying on the wet sidewalk last night.

"Last night," she explained, "I telephoned here and Togo told me where you had gone. I felt something was wrong and I waited. When you came out I spoke to you but you wouldn't answer. Then I saw you had left your coat on the sidewalk and I picked it up. Do you know what was in it, Horace? Nearly five thousand dollars! I've got it with me."

I HAVE A NEIGHBOUR

By Murray Leinster

I HAVE a neighbour who does not believe in love.

"Love is very well," he says, "but love must be founded on respect. My wife and I love each other sanely and well. We like, respect and sincerely admire each other. We married because we were congenial, and because we both wanted to have a comfortable home. You might even say we made our match with our heads. Marriage purely for love is foolish. Our affection for each other came after our marriage."

Now I understand the cheated, hungry look on his wife's face.

EVELYN

By George Briggs

WHEN she turns her head sidewise;
The line of her chin and throat
Running down her shoulder
Is as graceful as the undulating motion of the neck of a peacock,
Is as smooth as the petals of a Marechal Niel rose.

And her voice
Sounds like a man
Cleaning the rust out of a boiler.

CINDERELLA'S TWELVE O'CLOCK

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

HER name was Celia Conners and she was beautiful. It is impossible to describe how beautiful Celia was, so that anyone else can imagine her. Just take your favorite Beautiful Girl magazine cover and add to it the girl you wished you knew who sat at the next table at that little restaurant one night last week and then add the memory of the beauty of the first girl you ever loved and you'll have a faint idea of how beautiful Celia was. Her hair was a sort of a red-gold color—not too light, if you happen not to like blondes—and her eyes—well, anyhow, Celia was beautiful.

Celia clerked at The Mammoth, the New York department store which boasts of a rest room for its clerks, all complete with couches and the latest magazines, though it neglects to provide time to use it and which doesn't fine people for being late—just jots it down against them and fires them if they are late often enough. Celia worked at the candy counter.

All the girls at the candy counter were beautiful—that's why they were picked out to sell candy. You don't mind buying a spool of thread or a pair of blankets or a pan from an ugly girl, but, somehow, when it comes to creams and perfumery and gloves and candy, you prefer them good-looking. Celia and the other girls at the candy wore dresses of blue chambray with collars and cuffs of white and little white Dutch caps. The candy department showed quite a good profit.

Celia knew that she was beautiful and didn't mind it at all. You can't help knowing it, when every girl you know tries to find out what cold cream you use on your face, even though you are usually too sleepy to use any, and what secret formula you rub on your lashes to make them so long and thick, and what, if anything, you pink the tips of your fingers with.

Celia liked being beautiful, though she had to admit, sometimes, that it really didn't bring her anything. Occasionally, some unpleasant old man would simper up to the candy counter, and, after buying a pound of uncertain chocolates at three cents less than candy shop prices, would try to date her up for dinner. As she left the store at night, hurrying to catch the subway, unpleasant grey complexioned youths, hanging on yellow canes, would whisper to each other something about "a peach" and try to start something.

But these were about all, and they can't be regarded as great and lasting rewards to beauty. To be sure, she was getting two dollars more at the candy than she might have been getting at the tins or the notions, but then, if it were brains, instead of beauty, she happened to possess so much of, Celia might have been selling suits on commission and working up to be a buyer. No, beauty had brought no great tributes.

Celia lived in Harlem with her parents and three sisters and one brother. Her father worked occasionally, but he didn't care about getting back into the habit of it too strenuously. After all, he had been working for a good many years and felt, now, that after raising a family for the glory of his name and nation, he was entitled to a

bit of a rest. Her mother was large and fat, but the raising of her family had taken away some of the good nature that you might have expected from her round face.

Celia's brother was a union plumber and made six dollars a day, since the last raise went through. He was saving up to get married and already had picked out the girl and the flat—also in Harlem, four rooms and only twenty-eight dollars. The sisters were rather indefinite and held indefinite jobs which they changed not infrequently, and one of them had a young man. His name was Edward, and he called every Wednesday and Saturday night, which meant that he was "keeping company," which is one step from really being engaged. That sister's name was Julia, and she was next older than Celia, who was the youngest in the family. Celia was nineteen.

Celia lived in an apartment. It was five flights up and there was no elevator, but she would have looked a thousand scorns at you if you had referred to it as a tenement. It had tenement smells in the halls and tenement stairs, after the first flight up, but the entrance hall had imitation marble pillars and a big oil painting of "The Slave Girl," and there was, at infrequent intervals, a negro hallboy some place around.

The apartment itself consisted of a square living room, a series of small cubes, with a door and a "court" window in each, known as bedrooms, a larger cube known as a dining-room, and an unmistakable kitchen. The living room was furnished in fumed oak —the girls had learned that golden oak had "gone out"—and there was a rug of a faintly imitative Oriental pattern on the floor.

On the walls hung numerous pictures, photographs of the family and their friends in various strained poses, and Christmas gift pictures in curved gilt frames. Three or four years ago the girls had made away with the crayon enlargements of their parents which they had had made for them in an artistically darker period.

Celia shared a bedroom with Julia. Wandering through The Mammoth at noon hours on the days it was raining too hard to walk over to Fifth Avenue, Celia had absorbed some decorative knowledge. She applied this and paint to her bedroom and the result was ivory-tinted furniture and pink walls and chintz with pink roses in it. Celia was very proud of her room.

"Some day," she sighed, "I'm going to have everything like this—beautiful things like rich people have," though she didn't know where the things were coming from, nor even when "some day" would arrive. She had an idea that if she waited long enough something was bound to happen to her. She did want so to go places and have a good time.

Every morning Celia read, on the subway, a newspaper that had quite an important Society Column. Those who knew about such things said that the owner of the paper had social aspirations, and that this swollen column with its flatteries was the owner's sharpest wedge to get "in."

Celia didn't know, but she liked to read the Society Column. She read it every day. She liked to read about the dinners, the dances, the operas, the fêtes, the parties. She knew all about all of the Social Leaders, or, that is, those who are Social Leaders in the Society Column. She read about Alberta Burns and her skill as a horseback rider and driver of an aeroplane. She certainly did admire Alberta. She read of Helen Newcome and her lovely blonde hair and her admirers and her popularity. My, what a good time Society People did have!

Some day, perhaps, she herself might have an adventure.

Maybe someone, some place, would grant her some wishes or something and she . . .

Celia would have turned up her very perfect nose if you had suggested that she believed in the Cinderella story, that she felt herself a sort of Cinderella,

waiting—waiting—and yet, aren't we all waiting for the Fairy Godmother and the wonderful Adventure just around the corner, that is going to take us into Prosperity or Fame or Social Prominence, according to our secret hopes and, oh, most assuredly just deserts?

So Celia dreamed of luxury and of Society.

She dreamed of nights at the theater, of soft music, of an admirer whispering clever nothings in her ear, of her own just-right answers, of good things to eat in restaurants—that she had read about.

If her dreams were formed by what she read in her favorite Society Column or by the society weekly she bought, occasionally, when there had been lunch money to spare, we must blame her informant and not Celia. She did quite the best she could with the material she had.

Celia did other things besides dream and sell candy. Accompanied by her sisters or girls from The Mammoth and masculine admirers—she was too beautiful not to have them—Celia went to the movies—with ice cream or chop suey afterward—or to the theater—gallery seats—or to parties. Celia usually "went with" Laurence Morse. She was not "keeping company" with him. They were at the first and more indefinite stage, in her social rules, known as "going with."

Laurence Morse was not a Society Leader. He was not even a Rich Young Man. The Fairy Godmother had nothing to do with Laurence. He resembled not in the least the collar and suit advertisements that show us ideal American masculine beauty. He was a nice boy, with soft, indefinite hair that never seemed to lie smoothly. He was a little too slender and a little too meek and a little too gentle. His exact social status can be established at once by stating that he lived across the hall from the Conners in an apartment just like theirs as to living room and kitchen, but minus a few of the bedroom cubicles.

Laurence was the sole support of his widowed mother. He should have been noble and downcast about it, but instead he was jolly and had rather a friendly sense of humor. He worked in a wholesale hardware company during the day and evenings that Celia scorned his company he studied a course by correspondence that would, according to the advertisements of it, allow him to sit at a desk all day, with his coat on, and order around the coatless young men in his present humble position.

If Celia had not had the dreams about the Something That Was Going To Happen she might have taken Laurence more seriously. She was really fond of his mother, who had her over to dinner when there was anything special like home-made saucer pies. And she liked Laurence, too, though she did wish he'd dress up more and wear higher collars and sit straighter in his seat at the movies.

Indeed, she liked Laurence a-lot, better than anyone else she knew. She could laugh at the same things he did and never felt angry or annoyed at him as she did at the other young men she knew.

But still, Laurence was only Laurence and lived in Harlem and never would have any money. When he shyly tried to make love to her she laughed at him and could almost see the shadowy Fairy Prince beckoning. The Prince wore evening clothes, instead of the red velvet of the fairy tale. Celia had often sighed over this when she was alone—she had never gone any place with a young man in evening clothes!

II

Kelleam Cushing was the kind of a young man Celia liked to read about. He was quite as good looking in his way as Celia was in hers. Young girls cut his pictures out of the journals and stuck them, with always-bending pins, in the mirrors of their dressing tables, as proof of it. He flitted through more Young Dreams than he had any idea of.

For in addition to his looks Cushing

also had money, not just an odd million or two, but quite a lot of it. To be sure, if left to himself he never would have been able to have made even a million. He might have sold bonds or done some other nice, gentlemanly thing. But he didn't have to make money and he had brains enough not to make a fool of himself. He was the sort girls call "awful nice." And men admired him, too, and said money hadn't spoilt him. As he had been born with it, it would have had to start in early to have accomplished anything at all. At twenty-seven he was really a gentleman, which is more difficult than it sounds, and very much bored, which isn't difficult at all.

Cushing had tried everything. He had grown tired of Europe before Europe had become an impossibility. He had been raised with music and the arts, which occupy so much of the time of those who Arrive after adolescence. He took things for granted that other people fought to find out about. He was always looking for something different, for little, new experiments, for anything that might bring a single tinge of variety.

He saw the new plays and the new restaurants the first chance there was to see them. The girls that other men fought for were temptingly sugared and placed in front of him. He had had every new fad before it became fashionable; in fact, he often made a thing fashionable merely by having it. Quite frequently he wished that the man who had said there is nothing new under the sun hadn't been so nearly right about it.

Kelleam Cushing and his friend, Henry Day, happened to be passing The Mammoth one evening, just before six, when the first stream of employees poured out, buying papers from waiting newsboys and hurrying to the subway and elevated stations. Cushing was driving.

"Did you ever see so many homely girls?" asked Day.

Cushing looked at those who passed.

"No wonder," he said, "in there, all day. And yet, I don't believe they are uglier than the women I know. On the contrary, I think they are rather better looking. Why, where are your eyes? Some of them are lovely. The most beautiful girl in The Mammoth would be about the most beautiful girl we could find any place, it seems to me."

"Beat the girls in 'The Follies'?"

"Rather. You see, she'd be modest about it. Her beauty wouldn't be the thing she was making her living by. She wouldn't be used to displaying it. She'd never have had a chance to use her beauty."

He paused. Then:

"A girl like that—a really beautiful girl, who worked here in The Mammoth, what would she do, I wonder, if she could do whatever she wanted to?"

"You mean, if someone gave her a lot of money?"

"No; then she'd be just commonplace. There are too many like that, beautiful girls who get money suddenly. They get more commonplace, usually, than the girl who has always had money—or who never has it. I mean for an hour, say, or for an evening. That's it—I have it—the most beautiful girl in The Mammoth—anything she wants—for an evening! I'm going in to arrange it—now."

His car had been stopped by traffic. He drove close to the curb.

"My dear friend," said Day, "are you really losing the little brains that still remain with you? Are you going, now, into The Mammoth, and demand their most beautiful girl? A sort of a sacrifice to the gods?"

"Not at all. I'll ask to borrow her—for the evening. I'll explain it all to her. If she has any brains at all, along with her beauty, she'll be glad enough. And think of the fun of it! Something absolutely new! What will she do? Take us to the newest vaudeville or invent a new kind of a party? Or drive all evening in the park or—oh, can't you see? The thing's endless. You've been wondering where you'd spend the evening."

"It sounds interesting enough, but, Kelleam, the girl, next day. Won't it make her dissatisfied, unhappy, coming back to this, after an evening of having things her own way? It isn't fair to her, is it, showing her, just a little, how things might be, nice things, that she can't have? Won't she resent that? Won't she resent us, interfering with things? It isn't being perfectly fair."

"Perhaps not. Nothing is. But it is something new and that's even better."

III

CUSHING knew the manager of The Mammoth and he knew the manager was glad of the acquaintance. Five minutes later, in the manager's office, Cushing was explaining the situation. No harm would come to the girl. He'd promise that. It was nothing of that kind, anyhow. Just an experiment—psychology, if you like—to find out how a girl—the most beautiful girl in The Mammoth, to be exact—would spend a whole evening of doing just as she wanted to.

"If she's a beautiful girl—beautiful enough—she's planned something like this a hundred times. I want to know what she'd do. You know me well enough to know that I'll keep my word about things. You know Mr. Day and that he can be depended on."

Mr. Haskells, the manager, knew both of his callers. He felt that for this little favor he might hope to know them better in the future.

After all, it was a small enough thing to do for a friend—to point out the most beautiful girl under your management. He only wished that he might be included in the party. He hinted as much, but his callers didn't seem to understand.

Haskells didn't know the most beautiful girl, though he knew a few who had rather fair looks, at that. But Miss Grey, the welfare worker, would know, of course.

Miss Grey came—and knew. There was no possibility of an error. There were beautiful girls in The Mammoth, there was Miss Irons in the hair goods and Miss Jenson in the toilet articles, but there was only one most beautiful, one superlative girl—Celia Conners in the candy. Miss Grey had not been told what was to happen to the most beautiful girl but she was sure whom it ought to happen to.

It was just six when Celia was summoned. She was eating peanut brittle when the order came, but her perfect lips were soft and rosy and uncandied and her perfect nose was white and powdered when she came into the office, trembling a bit, though on the way up she had assured herself, half a dozen times, that, if she were being fired for anything, there were a dozen other jobs just as good as the one in The Mammoth, anyhow.

Miss Grey brought her in and rather flounced out, quite un-godmother like, when she was dismissed. It was only natural that she had wanted to stay.

"Allow me," said Mr. Haskels, impressively, to his callers, "to present to you Miss Celia Conners, of the Candy. Miss Conners, Mr. Kelleam Cushing and Mr. Henry Day."

Celia blushed, and dropped her eyes and then raised them again.

"I'm pleased to meet you," she said. It was what one said, in her set, when introduced.

Kelleam Cushing—himself—and she was meeting him! At that very minute a picture of Kelleam Cushing—in tennis flannels—was stuck in her dressing table mirror, and another, on his yacht, the *Butterfly*, was fastened to her pink bedroom wall. She knew about Henry Day, too, though she didn't care much for his pictures. But Kelleam Cushing!

Cushing and Day looked at Celia and then at each other. As far as looks were concerned, they signalled that there was absolutely nothing in the world the matter with those of Miss Conners.

It was Cushing's party, so he was the spokesman.

"Miss Conners," he said, "if you've no engagement, we would feel greatly

honored if you would spend the evening with us."

"I'm—I'm afraid I don't quite understand," said Celia.

What could the wonderful Kelleam Cushing, leader of a hundred cotillions, petted favorite of society, front page magazine feature, want with her, Celia Conners of the candy? Still, why not? She knew she was beautiful, and hadn't she always rather been expecting something of the sort to happen? Well, here it was.

"If you'd like,'" Cushing explained, "we thought it would be rather a good time, if you'd tell us how you'd like to spend the evening—we'll do anything you say. Just this one evening we'll try to plan that there won't be anything you can't do."

Celia saw.

"I'd like it—a lot," she said, and smiled. "I understand. Anything I want to do—until twelve o'clock." Cinderella's ball had ended at twelve—she remembered. So, of course, this would end at twelve, too.

"Yes, until twelve," agreed Cushing. He did hope she'd plan something that would be fun.

"We'll start now, if you like. I've a car outside."

Celia giggled. Mr. Haskells was afraid that she didn't quite appreciate the greatness of the occasion. But she did—far more than Mr. Haskells—for Celia was beautiful and nineteen.

"First," she said, "I'd like to go home and put on my other—I mean some nicer clothes. She'd show Mr. Cushing and Mr. Day that she knew how to act about things.

She gave them her address as she went out. She was sorry she lived so far away, but she simply had to put on something besides the shirtwaist she had worn to work. She didn't have to wear nice things to The Mammoth, for she changed into blue chambray when she got there.

She had never ridden in a really nice automobile before. Her other automobile rides had been restricted to two rides in a taxi, one at the expense of The Mammoth, when she had worked overtime at a charity booth for the firm, and once, coming home from a party, but that time she had had something to drink she had never tasted before and it had given her a headache so that time wasn't much fun and she had had a few rides with some cousins of her mother's who owned a small automobile, but they always took her out through small towns she didn't care about. This, of course, would be real—and fun.

She stepped into the car at the very doors of The Mammoth. Two girls she knew stared at her, their eyes round with wonder, and tried to convey wordless questions. She tossed her head and ignored them. What did they know about the Fairy Prince, anyhow?

The car was a small one and Celia found that it wasn't as comfortable as she had hoped. She wanted to sink into soft cushions and give curt directions to a chauffeur. Now she was squeezed rather tightly into a roadster of a long foreign cut and painted a peculiar gray. She knew it must be dreadfully expensive, but she would have preferred any kind of a closed car.

They moved slowly, at first, on the crowded streets, but her hat had not been bought for motoring and she had to hold it on with both hands to keep it from blowing away and even then wisps of hair escaped and blew around her face. As they went faster, she felt dust in her face, too. She knew she looked just a fright and she liked looking neat and sleek and powdered.

Cushing was too busy driving to talk and Day was never very clever in conversation with women. Celia almost concluded that Julia's young man could talk better. Though this was far too early in the evening to judge, of course.

When the car reached her home, Celia stepped out as if it were quite natural, after all. She greeted the hall boy with a haughty nod and ran up the five flights of stairs.

But once in the apartment, she burst into speech, incoherent, excited, hugging Julia as she explained things.

"I'm to do anything I want to, all evening, from now on. It isn't much after six now. I'm to have a grand, heavenly time—in Society. I'm to do anything. Hurry up and hunt out my clean pink camisole. I don't want to waste a second."

IV

ASSISTED by two of the indefinite sisters, Celia put on her best dress—dark blue with thin blue chiffon sleeves. She had a pink evening dress that she wore to parties, but she decided it lacked "class." It had cost only twelve dollars and ninety-eight cents almost a year ago. The blue might not be dressy enough, but at least it was neat and stylish, and had been recommended by the saleswoman as appropriate for every occasion. She remembered reading descriptions of Society girl's dresses that were dark blue lots of times.

Cushing and Day nodded their approval when they saw her. She was very beautiful and neat, but about as unexciting looking as a young school teacher from up state some place. Still, she might think of something really startling to do, now that she was well started.

"Hello," said Cushing, cordially, and helped her into the car. "Now tell us just exactly what you want to do."

"If you don't mind," said Celia, as they went back to town, her hair was firmer now, though she still disliked the dust and the wind, "I wish you'd both put on full dress—evening clothes, I mean—and ask another girl and maybe another couple or two—a sort of a party. Can I have dinner any place I choose?"

"Any place," said Cushing.

"I'd like to go to the Astor," said Celia.

She had heard about the Astor. People were always going there. Miss Kirtzman, buyer for the linens, was always being taken by a young man of whom she spoke as "a boy with a great future."

"If you'll take me there, while you're getting ready, I could write a note while I waited for you. I'd like that, I think."

Celia had always wanted to write a note in a hotel. In The Mammoth girls were always talking about: "I went into the McAlpin and sent a note to Mr. Wortz and told him I couldn't go to lunch with him," and in stories: "She dropped in at the Ritz and sent a note to Van Renssalaer, asking him to have tea with her the following day."

Yes, she'd like to send a note. It would be quite the thing to do. She had often thought about going into a hotel for this same note writing, but she was afraid of the doormen in their official looking uniforms and that she wouldn't know what to do or where to find a place to write a note after she did get in.

"And please get a big, closed car," she gave final instructions to Cushing as he left her at a writing table in the Astor.

Now she didn't know whom to write to. Celia wrote very few letters. But she knew the proper way to start a letter on hotel stationery, whether or not the statement bore any relation to the truth, was: "I am dining here tonight."

One might follow this with "and am thinking of you" or a similar phrase, depending on the recipient of the letter. But even to say this there had to be someone to say it to.

Celia made funny scrawls on two sheets of paper and then looked around. Cushing had tipped one of the attendants to look out for her, but she didn't know it and felt awkward and ill at ease. With no one to write to, she felt as if she had remained at the hotel under false pretenses.

She couldn't see any Society women writing "I am dining here tonight." The women were with masculine escorts or self-sufficient without them. Well, she would have an escort soon—and such an escort! It had happened—her evening! She was going to have a wonderful time—in Society! But

was she going to? This wasn't wonderful. But, of course, the real evening hadn't started. She bit the end of the penholder and waited.

It seemed a long time to Celia before Cushing got back. It was really only a very few minutes, for he had rushed home, dressed and had another car out even in record time for him.

"The others will meet us here in a few minutes," he told her. "I 'phoned for a table. Henry Day asked Miss Denning and there will one other couple. Is six enough of a party?"

Celia told him it was just right, and smiled. He had on evening clothes! She wished now she had put on the pink dress, though it did need cleaning. It would take too much time to go home for it. A table ordered! She knew that people did things like that. This was going to be the real thing.

She didn't know what to say to Cushing. She had thought that they would be able to start immediately on a long, gently flowing stream of sparkling repartee. She told him that she had read about him and his friends in the papers and he said "Indeed?" and smiled very pleasantly, but that wasn't conversation.

He asked her polite things about herself, not at all as if he were investigating social conditions, but somehow she couldn't make the answers sparkle much. Cushing seemed so stiff, so dignified. And he didn't even like the movies! She had thought, of course, that he attended every one of the big feature pictures on the opening nights and kept up regularly with the serials.

The others joined them. Miss Denning was a slender blonde girl, with lovely hair and too thin a neck, who pouted continually. The other man was Grant Wright, and the girl was Helen Newcome! How often she had read about them! But she hadn't read that Wright was too fat and laughed at nearly everything nor that Miss Newcome liked to pretend that things astonished her and opened her eyes widely at nearly every remark. Henry Day, of course, was nice, but quiet.

Altogether, the crowd wasn't nearly as gay and jolly as when her sisters and their young men or a group from The Mammoth got together.

Of course, perhaps when this crowd got started—

She liked the table well enough when they reached it, but she resented the way people stared at her and her party, resented the careless nod that Cushing gave to someone he knew, resented the waiters. She didn't know why. She just did. Celia had always been afraid of waiters. When she dined with Laurence in little fifty-cent table d'hote Hungarian or Italian restaurants they always held low conversations as to the amount necessary to tip—and usually decided on a quarter as a great and generous gift, and later talked it over as to whether the waiter had been polite in the way he acknowledged it. Sometimes Celia had been sorry they hadn't tipped just fifteen cents and kept the other dime for a cake of milk chocolate.

Somehow these waiters were different. And they were not as pleasant as they were different. They were cold, aloof creatures who never would smile at you when you ordered—almost machines, in fact.

The decorations were quite disappointing to Celia. She had imagined that the Astor, which was to her the last word in where to dine, would have gorgeous decorations—lots of things to look at and talk about later. She felt almost as if Cushing had deceived her about where she was, yet she knew he hadn't. So this was Society! Why, nobody seemed to be having a very good time!

What should she order? She was quite excited over it, and thought of all of the things she wanted to taste. Filet Mignon was one thing, though she was afraid she couldn't order it, unless she could find it on the menu card and point it out to the waiter. She never could pronounce it. She never had tasted or seen it, even, but the name was always appearing places. And she knew she wanted Potatoes Au

Gratin and Nesselrode Pudding. She was sure of that much. How lovely it would be not to have to look at the right-hand column of price-marks first of all.

But—the waiter didn't even bring her a menu card, and Cushing said:

"I ordered dinner over the 'phone. I thought it would save time. If there is anything special you'd like to have, you'll order it, won't you, please? This is your night, you know."

She couldn't even get to see a menu card, to find out what the prices were! She wanted to ask for one, but felt that it wouldn't be at all the right thing. And she didn't know how to pronounce Filet Mignon.

"No, I'm sure this will be a lot nicer," she said.

It was a good dinner, but as she ate it Celia admitted to herself that it wasn't as wonderful as she thought it ought to be. It didn't have the Ambrosia and Nectar flavor it should have had. It was just food, like her mother's cooking, only flavored with things she didn't care a lot for—and the dishes were very big and the portions very small.

There was a thin soup first, and not much of it, and the others ate only a little. Then there was what Celia called a "relish," a bit of anchovy and pimento. Celia didn't like it. The meat was better. She wished she knew the name of it. It was a small, round piece, with bacon around it and tomatoes and mushrooms on top. But she couldn't ask the name, of course. No one did that. The potatoes were a sort of a chopped, mashed kind and there was only canned asparagus—and she had that lots of times. The salad was mixed-up fruit, and Celia liked her mother's salad-dressing better. The dessert was a kind of an ice cream, but good.

The conversation at dinner annoyed Celia more than it pleased her. Everyone tried to be nice to her, and she tried to be nice, too, and they tried to include her in what they said, but there was so much that she didn't understand at all, about people and theaters and things. But the amazing thing was that it was not much different from the conversation that her crowd had, except that it was more restrained and affected and stiffer, and they didn't seem to be having such a good time. The girls were awfully affected, she thought, with their little gestures and little pouts. And the men were rather stupid, even. They weren't even as clever as—why, as Laurence. And nobody complimented her or told her how beautiful she was. There was a decided lack of "jollying" and everyone was very quiet.

"What now, Guest of Honor?" asked Cushing as the dinner was nearly over.

Celia thought hard.

She had been thinking hard about the same thing for some minutes. There were so many things she wanted to see and do. She would have liked to have gone to a ball or a party, but thought maybe there didn't happen to be one that night or the others would have been to it, of course. And the rest had on evening clothes and her blue dress, though stylish, might not be as "always appropriate" as the saleswoman had promised. Besides, she probably wouldn't know what to do. Theaters? There wasn't any one thing in town that she had heard of that she wanted to see. If there had been she could have asked Laurence to take her. You can get quite good seats for fifty cents, right near the front rows in the gallery, and you can see everything if you get them near the center, a week ahead. No, theaters weren't quite grand enough.

Then—she knew! Of course—Grand Opera! In a box! She had always wanted to "see" a Grand Opera. She liked to say to her friends, when they talked about music, that she "loved classical pieces."

She really preferred ballads with rather sentimental choruses, and ragtime, but when she heard "classic music" on the Victrola she tried to look soulful and pretend that she enjoyed it a great deal. Didn't she read, in that same Society Column, about those who

sat in boxes at the Opera, and sometimes, even, what they wore? "The Diamond Horseshoe," "the season's Boxholders," "in the Cunningham box" and similar phrases ran through her mind.

"I'd like best of all," she told Cushing, "to go to Grand Opera and sit in a box—if there is a performance tonight."

She knew that you got boxes for certain nights, like every Monday, and that the bill changed a great deal, but she was rather in doubt as to whether Opera was a nightly performance.

"The season is still on," Cushing told her.

Then, "What's on tonight, Grant? Do you happen to know? You see, Mr. Wright is our opera authority."

Wright didn't know.

"I think you can get the Phillips box," he volunteered. "This isn't any of our nights, is it?"

Cushing gave the waiter some directions. The waiter went away. In a few minutes he came back. The bill was "Parsifal," and they could get the Phillips box. How nicely everything was going!

After the coffee Celia kept an eye out for the check. She wanted to see the amount Cushing paid. Miss Hermans, in the ribbons, was always telling of people who took her to dinner:

"And, my dear, we ate at the Biltmore, and only had a few simple things, and you can believe me or not, but our bill came to fourteen dollars, and that was without a drop of wine."

Celia wanted to know, so that she, too, could talk about it.

But when the check came Cushing looked at it rather casually, Celia thought, though Laurence didn't like to count up items, either, though she usually urged it: "You never can tell when the waiter will try to add something you didn't get."

Then Cushing just signed something to the check and handed it back to the waiter. And for a tip he handed him a bill—and Celia couldn't tell how much it was. She felt cheated. What could she tell about that dinner? The food was good, but what were the names of the things? And she didn't know how much it cost or anything.

V

THE ride to the Metropolitan was short. The curtain was up when they got there. Celia was interested in the little red room back of the box, where they hung their wraps, and the little red box itself. It was not as grand as she had expected it. She had been in a box once at a matinee at vaudeville—a party given for a girl who had worked at The Mammoth, but was going to Cincinnati—and the box had been even prettier, though it didn't have a little room back of it.

The Metropolitan itself didn't quite measure up to her dreams of it. It was just a big theater with a lot of gilt! She looked up at the balconies and was mighty glad she and Laurence hadn't ever decided on the topmost balcony.

She didn't know much about "Parsifal" except the name. The long act dragged through and it was quite stupid. There weren't any "airs" to it. She soon found out that before any of the actors came on the orchestra always played the same little strain, someone in the box called it a "motif," and she remembered having read the word some place, and they were rather interesting to listen to, though not very pretty. But she couldn't get the plot very well—something about a pure young man who shot a bird by mistake and hadn't ever kissed a girl. Only, the young man was old and large and fat and grinned a great deal, and everyone seemed a trifle wilder than they ought to be, and the scenery wasn't much, and the costumes were quite cheap looking. A musical comedy never would have stood for them. Of course, Celia persuaded herself that the voices must be quite grand. But the songs were long and tiresome and tuneless.

The chorus just walked around, old

and fat and shapeless, in ugly costumes. The whole thing was too solemn, like church.

During the first intermission, Cushing gave her a program and a little score and she read an outline of the plot, which cleared things up a little. But, the next act was longer and more tiresome than ever. She was actually quite bored with it!

During the second intermission, Celia suggested that they get up and walk out, as she saw others doing. So they went into the corridors and Celia watched the people. It was the crowd she had always wanted to see. She read the names on the plates on the doors of the boxes and was thrilled by them, but not by the occupants themselves. The people were tired looking mostly and didn't dress so well at that. Miss Kingston, in the hats, had more style than any of them. Her party talked to her and to each other and nodded to acquaintances, but they seemed unusually quiet for people at the theater. Celia had thought Society people were jolly and laughing. Didn't people go into Society to have a good time?

The last act was the worst of all. The chorus of knights, doing the same things they had done in the first act, the long song of Kundry, the songs of Parsifal himself almost got on Celia's nerves and she wasn't very nervous. Yet, this had been what she wanted to do, most of all. How long the opera was. Did Society people have to do this —night after night? No wonder they were tired looking! Her party looked bored, too. She wondered if they were as bored as she was.

Finally she caught herself with her eyelids dropping—almost going to sleep. On her great night! Cushing saw it, too.

"Shall we go?" he asked and looked at his watch. It was near eleven. "This is a long opera, you know."

She saw a look of relief come to the faces of the others when she nodded. She learned later that Parsifal had started very early. She certainly was glad she had missed the first of it. Her evening was almost over!

"What now?" asked Cushing. He looked tired. His anticipation of a "different" evening had not included Parsifal.

This time Celia thought even harder. What did Society people do to have a good time? Why, of course!

"I want to go to a cabaret show," she said, "you know, where they dance and have a cabaret show."

She had always wanted to go to a cabaret but everyone had told her about the awful prices and Laurence and the other boys she knew had been afraid to risk it.

VI

THEY got into the car again and drove to an ornate restaurant. There were lights and music enough this time, even to satisfy Celia. And the men at the other tables looked at her more with the sort of admiration to which she was accustomed. But—her crowd seemed vaguely out of place. Why they should, she didn't know. She was sure this was the sort of thing that Society people always did.

They were trying hard to be pleasant to her, she saw that. But they seemed restrained, worlds apart.

"What shall we eat?" asked Cushing. "Miss Conners, won't you suggest something?"

Celia suggested. She knew what she wanted. It was lobster à la Newburg and she wanted it brought to the table in a chafing dish with alcohol burning under it and she wanted chicken salad and French pastry and champaigne—wine, that is.

She thought Miss Denning smothered an exclamation, but she wasn't sure. Wasn't lobster and wine the approved midnight Society supper? She was sure it was. The magazines always said so.

The lobster didn't taste as good as she thought it would but the chicken salad was fine and she liked the champagne. She felt herself quite wise for she knew you mustn't say things about

how champagne tickles your nose. She was used to champagne, why, of course—when her cousin Mildred had married Horace Adams there had been champagne and she had had it at an engagement party and once on New Year's eve. So she knew how it ought to taste. This didn't seem as sweet as she remembered it—not quite as good. But she didn't say anything, because of course Kelleam Cushing ought to know the kind to order.

The cabaret show was a great deal like the vaudeville acts that Celia saw every week or two with Laurence—not even as good as some—but as no one seemed to pay much attention to it that didn't make much difference. And between numbers there was dancing.

"Shall we dance?" Cushing had asked, but Miss Denning had pouted and Miss Newcome had said "Here?" with infinite scorn in her voice. And this was Society! Celia was glad her crowd had better times.

Conversation dragged. No one seemed to know what to say. When anyone did say anything, it was something Celia didn't quite understand. The men seemed heavy, restless. The women seemed sleepy. There was none of the lightness, the gayety, the good fun she had expected and thought there ought to be at a midnight supper party. Finally Celia saw Cushing actually looking at his watch.

"Is—it nearly twelve?" she asked, as merrily as she could. She felt subdued, as if she had been cheated out of a wonderful time—more than that—as if she had been cheated out of dreams of a wonderful time that never could be.

After all, the things she had done this evening weren't any more fun—not as much fun as if she and Laurence had spent the evening some place. She wondered where Laurence was. He had been talking to a girl named Roberts a lot lately. If he spent the evening with her—

"Twenty minutes of twelve," Cushing told her.

"We'd better be going then," said Celia. Again the waiter came. He was paid this time, but even then, Celia couldn't see the check nor the amount of the tip.

The ride home was almost silent. Occasionally someone said something and the others laughed politely. Celia was glad when she got home. She shook hands all around as she said good night.

"I've, I've had an awfully nice time. I thank you for a pleasant evening," she told Cushing, in the lower hall. She wouldn't let him walk up the five flights of stairs with her.

VII

At her door she paused, hunting for her key in the front of her dress, where she always slipped it. She glanced across the hall. From under the Morses' door came a thin blade of light. Laurence was still up—studying the correspondence course, most likely. She crossed the hall and knocked gently.

Laurence, in an old brown sweater, opened the door.

"So," he laughed, "you are back from your ball, Cinderella. Oh, your sisters told me all about it. Have they turned your head with their fine times?" There was a serious note under the laughter.

"Silly thing," giggled Celia, the most natural giggle she had had all evening. "I've had an—an awful nice time. Mr. Cushing is awful nice. I had dinner at the Astor and went to grand opera and sat in a box and heard Parsifal and then to a cabaret show after the opera."

It was exciting in the telling.

"Where did *you* go, Laurence?"

"Me, oh, I went to the movies. I took Clara Roberts, and it was a pretty good bill at the Paragon, though you don't care for movies any more, I suppose."

"Oh, Laurence, do you like her?"

"She's a nice girl. I forgot to say that your sisters and a couple of others were along, too. But if you decide you're too much in Society for me to go with—"

"Silly."

"Today," said Laurence, and ruffed up his hair and pulled his sweater tighter around his shoulders, "today, the boss said I could start in the other department on the first of the month and that means, if I keep on studying that —in a month or two—you and I—oh, Celia, you don't care for money and Society, do you? I know how beautiful you are and how little I've got, and now that you've met rich people and had a taste of things that they do—"

"Silly thing," said Celia, and put one hand, gently, on his thin shoulder, "I —I didn't have such a terribly good time. Now that I've been in Society and know what it is, I really don't think I'm going to long for it very much. I—I think it's an awful bore."

And just at that minute, Kelleam Cushing and Henry Day were talking.

"I hope you're satisfied," Henry Day said. "You've probably put all sorts of notions into that girl's head. She'll probably never again be content with the things she gets at home."

"It's not that serious I hope," answered Cushing, "though she was an awfully nice little kid and had a mighty pretty little head to put notions into. It wasn't worth it, though. It was an awful bore."

Outside some place a clock struck twelve.

LOVE CAME TREMENDOUSLY

By Morris Gilbert

LET life be, just an instant, as before—
Wayward and light and thin—ere, passing near,
Love came tremendously, and shut a door.

(Blue twilights would the swallows dip and soar;
A cricket churned, night's drowsy chanticleer)—
Let life be, just an instant, as before.

(Sleep blossomed like the clover, dreams would pour
Like showers, fields away)—and then austere
Love came tremendously, and shut a door. . . . .

A wantoning moth lilts by, 'twill lilt no more,
A fluttering wish that wings a small career:
Let life be, just an instant, as before,

For there is nothing in physicians' lore
To dry, before it falls, a little tear—
Love came tremendously, and shut a door.

I am a little heavy with the store
Of passing joy I know—bear with me, dear!
Let life be, just an instant, as before
Love came tremendously, and shut a door.

FINIS

By Will F. Jenkins

HE was dying, and he was interested in the process. He had had so long in which to anticipate the event that he took what can only be described as a sporting interest in the manner of his demise. He had been recalling the leave-taking of his various friends who had died. One had passed away peacefully in his sleep. Another had been telling the doctor a story at which the nurse was blushing when his breath stopped. A third grew angry about something, threw a glass at his nurse, and fell back. . . .

It was an interesting subject. The dying man thought it over with an absorption that strengthened his hold on life. His brother had been giving instructions as to the disposition of his property when his time came—an uncle had been swearing at his gout. People seemed to die at very odd moments, and in very strange frames of mind.

He decided that when it came time for him to die that he would do it gracefully. He would smile at his nurse, close his eyes, and allow himself to sink—

A fly lit on his face. He moved his head from side to side, but the fly remained. It walked about. It approached his nose. It tickled. He sneezed violently. . . .

The nurse came in presently and saw him lying quite still.

"Ain't it funny how them old guys drop off!" she remarked.

THE PORTRAIT

By John R. Finck

I HAD been drinking.
The Devil saw me home.
We entered my apartment.
On my chiffonier stood the portrait of a flabby woman with a double chin, a prolonged waist-line, corpulent hips and flat feet.
"Who is this?" I cried.
"That," replied the Devil, "is the picture of your wife twenty years from now."

. . . . . .

The next morning they found me with a bullet hole through my temple.
Clutched in my hand was the portrait of my wife's mother.

THE CONCLUSIONS OF A MAN OF SIXTY

By Owen Hatteras

I

A MAN sweats and fumes for a solid year to write a symphony in G minor. He puts enormous industry into it, and much talent, and maybe no little genius. Nevertheless, its final value in the open market of the world is a great deal less than that of a fur overcoat, half a Rolls-Royce motor-car, or a handful of hair from the whiskers of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. . . . This teaches us, beloved, that God's in His heaven and all's well with the world.

II

SAY what you will of the Seventh of the Ten crimes, it is at least democratic.

III

IT is the misfortune of humanity that its history is chiefly written by third-rate men. The first-rate man seldom has any impulse to record and philosophise; his impulse is to act. Thus the writing of history is left to college professors, valetudinarians, asses. Few historians have ever shown any capacity for actual affairs. Even Gibbon was a failure as a member of Parliament. As for Thucydides, he made such a mess of his military (or, rather, naval) command that he was exiled from Athens for twenty years and finally assassinated. How much better we would understand the history of man if there were more historians like Julius Cæsar! Remembering their rough notes, think what marvelous histories Bismarck and Frederick the Great might have written! Such men, being at the center of events, have the exact facts; the usual historians have to depend on deductions, rumors, guesses. More, the great man knows how to tell the truth, however unpleasant; he lacks the mushy sentimentality of the professional historian. But he is born with writer's cramp, and so we have to go on depending upon the pious fiction of the professors. . . .

IV

FOR thirty-five years I have been accused of being a misogynist. And why? Simply because, during all that time, I have been a monogamist.

V

LET a woman have a good mouth and good eyes, and she is beautiful. The other points are secondary. One of the most beautiful women I know has a nose like a shoehorn. Another sweet one has hair like wire. A pug nose with good eyes is beauty. A Greek nose with muddy eyes is not. What are good eyes? The prime test, I think, is their appearance of depth. They must be true windows of the soul; not blinds. Long lashes help here. So do dark shadows underneath. So do straight, dark eyebrows over white flashes of skin. The color of the actual eye is immaterial, but it must be transparent. That is why dark eyes, black or blue or gray, are the most beautiful. A china-blue eye seems opaque. So does one of a light, yellow-

ish brown. So does one with any hint of red in it. As for the mouth, its beauty depends upon the teeth. They must be white, regular and a bit transparent—that is, pearly. Dead-white teeth, particularly if they be large, are ugly. The lips? Let them be red and not too bulging, and all the purposes of justice are served. The object of lips is to be kissed. One cannot kiss a fat, shapeless lip, or a colorless one, or one the hue of a mackerel. Lip-rouge is a godsend, not only to women, but to men. It saves many a shiver.

VI

PROPOSED plot for a modern novel, say by George Moore! Herman is in love with Violet, who is married to Armand, an elderly diabetic. Herman and Violet, who are Christians, await with laudable patience the termination of Armand's distressing malady. One day Dr. Frederick M. Allen discovers his cure for diabetes. . . .

VII

IT is often argued against certain books that they depict vice as attractive. This recalls the king who hanged a judge for deciding that an archbishop was a mammal.

VIII

THE only permanent values in the world are truth and beauty, and of these it is probable that truth is lasting only in so far as it is a manifestation of beauty. The world is a charnel house of dead truths. What has become, for example, of all the impeccable revelations of the Middle Ages? But everything that was essential in the beauty of the Middle Ages still lives.

IX

VARIOUS tests for voters have been proposed in America, but few of them have been either honest or discreet. Those based upon education have failed because they have involved imbecile "interpretations" of the Constitution, which is a puzzle even to lawyers. Those based upon property qualifications have mistaken wealth for intelligence. The combination of the two, the so-called three-class voting system, has failed both in Prussia and in Belgium. I offer a simpler scheme. What I propose is that each prospective voter, when he applies for registation, be asked the following questions under oath:

1. Do you believe that Friday is an unlucky day?
2. Do you believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?
3. Do you believe that you know what truth is, what right is, and what justice is?
4. Do you think you ever fool your wife?
5. Have you ever marched in a parade?
6. Do you believe that George Washington was a democrat?

For more than one "yes," blackball the candidate and set the bloodhounds on him.

MARITAL happiness consists principally in being a facile liar, an accomplished diplomat—which are much alike—and a brilliant lover. No married man is any of these; therefore all marriages are failures.

ON but two occasions does woman reach divinity. Just before the first kiss and immediately after the last.

THE MONSTER

By Ben Hecht

VIOLA married him out of curiosity. It was not a curiosity inspired by virginal tremors. Viola was not, in fact, of the virginal order. She was very polite and belonged to an excellent family. But since she had turned nineteen she had been renouncing conventions. She renounced them quietly, without the usual joining of clubs and alliances with leagues. Viola merely looked about her and discovered there were all manner of things she would like to do—and she did them. She eyed the world with a blue frank eye. If she desired to smoke, she smoked. If she desired to drink, she drank. If she desired to sin, she sinned. Viola was, in a way, ideal. At twenty-two she was a thorough modern, a woman of the world. Modern young women are harder to describe than the old-fashioned ones. Grave, vigorous authors have written whole books about things which were no more than casual escapades to Viola.

Being a young woman of good taste in addition to a modern, Viola flourished and grew beautiful and healthy. She met many people. Some interested her. Some bored her. Some loved her. She was polite to all of them. Viola was no Lady Quixote breaking lances against the windmills of convention. She did not sound the obbligato of fanatical stutterings concerning free woman. There were no belligerent flourishes to her. She was simple. She was direct. If she was cynical it was a healthy cynicism as distinguished from the cynicism of the flat-footed, short-haired young women who attend lectures on sex. She was just cynical enough to be discreet, just sufficiently bourgeoise to be well mannered. When she moved in the society in which her excellent family revolved she could mingle ecstatically with dowagers, low necks, bathroom scandals, pure girls, parlor wrecks and the Sleek Vapidities which constituted the male contingent.

As the years passed, three in all, Viola achieved a poise which nothing could have marred. As she moved through life she perceived that all people clung to something, that most of them stood upside down, that for some preposterous reason all these clinging frightened people were chiefly afraid of each other. A grave, vigorous author could have done wonders with Viola. In the theater, of course, Viola would have committed suicide. She would have been made to yearn and yearn, dream in the first act, stifle in the second, and commit suicide in the third. Perhaps such a process is logical. There are other Violas. But this Viola did nothing more than marry a man out of curiosity. It was a cold, clinical curiosity. . . .

You see, he was a Sunday School superintendent—the sort of man who listens to you, holding his hands on a level with this stomach in a kind of abdominal prayer, the fingers spread and touching gently. This man had a benign face. It was the type of benign face which grows stern and warlike in the face of sin—a face whose every contour is hated by the devil. The owner of such a face is ever on the alert to drive the snake out of Eden. In the presence of evil the eyes narrow, the lips stiffen, the nose lengthens, the snake flees. But it would be unjust to ridicule him, unjust and futile. There

was, after all, a certain graceful grandeur about this man. He seemed like something triumphant. His smallest gestures were fraught with the quiet power of a man who never stares at a woman's leg in the street car.

He exuded a simple, unalterable belief in what he termed the eternal normalities. He was not bigoted about the business. It must further be admitted that he was not the sort of man who bears his cross on a watch chain. He worked. When he saw evil he worked to cast it out. To the uncalloused eye he was consistent. One of the most enticing things about this man was the way he sounded overtones. His slightest conversations, for instance, were somehow tracts pointing out the sweet things in life. His most casual acts were somehow gentle coronations of purity and unselfishness. This was not because of any intense preoccupation with such doctrines. It was due to the overtones. Observed enthusiastically, he was a combination of Ajax and Little Boy Blue, with a dash of God. His name was William Eddy.

It must not be presumed from what has been said that Mr. Eddy was vain or pompous. He was not. To end this beating around the bush, Mr. Eddy was the sort of man the low scurrilous mind can never grasp. The low scurrilous mind believes firmly that this sort of man is secretly plotting the ruin of young women, mere children, that he is secretly engaged in usurious enterprises against widows and orphans. It clings to the notion that when this sort of person dies and goes to heaven he is invariably mourned by three wives who meet for the first time at the funeral, and engage in lawsuits over his life insurance.

Viola met him with a faint, urbane smile which managed only to disturb the corners of her lips. Viola listened to him good-humoredly. It was at her parents' home.

At this time Viola was twenty-five and her poise was so serene as to be startling. When during a discussion about Art—people were always discussing Art at Viola's parents' home—when during such a discussion Mr. Eddy remarked, item one, that he considered nude pictures immoral; item two, that he held realism in literature to be unnecessary and baleful; item three, that he believed women and children should be protected from the lecherous persons who did these things—Viola's eyes did not darken, her lips did not quiver. The faint urbane smile deepened and a distracting sigh escaped her.

Viola's mother fidgetted unhappily and waited for the outburst. Viola's mother lived in a peculiar intricate fear of Viola. She imagined her as some sort of a thunderclap forever hovering in the vicinity of people who believed in God. She was continually defending her own morality and her own religion. And Viola at such times was continually answering:

"Why, mother dear, it seems that such things should need no defense. Of course you're sweet and wholesome and I don't understand why you should apologize for it."

But Viola's mother remained disturbed about something. She was immensely relieved when Viola continued to smile after what Mr. Eddy had said.

Viola's father, however, had no tact. He laughed delightedly at Mr. Eddy's remark. Any reference to bedrooms or nudes or artists invariably brought a laugh or at least a knowing wink from Viola's father. He was fat, pompous and possessed of a great temper. In fact, he appeared the true opposite of Mr. Eddy.

This father of Viola's, to complete the picture, had an idea that he ruled his home with an iron hand, that he was the head of the family and that women were growing crazier every day. In short, he was a very stupid man and if he had to write stories for magazines instead of selling lumber he would have perished in the poorhouse. Things being as they were, however, he was blessed with a great supply of money.

II

WHEN Mr. Eddy left that first night Viola retired to her room to muse. She had an apartment of her own, but sometimes, out of the genial courtesy which was one of her achievements, she slept in her parents' home. As she undressed this night Viola recalled innumerable little details about Mr. Eddy. The details when put together made quite a caricature. He was a very distasteful person, even to one of Viola's poise. She perceived him swimming in an odor of sanctity like a fish in oil. Her ruminations were not violent. They were too abstract, too whimsical. She was the artist contemplating clay. But in a moment of irritation which attended the unlacing of her corset Viola imagined Mr. Eddy, *per se*, creeping up on a Home for Cripples with a lighted match in his hand ready to set fire to it.

Once in her nightgown, however, she smiled again. Mr. Eddy somehow fascinated her. It was a morbid, unworthy fascination. As she grew sleepy she kept thinking of him in obscene situations, embracing drunken chorus girls, winking at old women, touching parishioners under the table with his foot.

She awoke the next morning fully determined. Mr. Eddy had innocently thrust himself into Viola's path at a turning point in her career. Of late life had grown just a trifle dull for her—not the savage dulness of the sated intellect or the wearisome inertia of spent nerves, but merely a vague and as yet disputable dulness—the sort of thing which "resembles sorrow only as the mist resembles rain." She would ruin Mr. Eddy. She would carefully, cunningly crawl into the hidden life of this Palladin of purity. She would illuminate the dank recesses of the Sepulchre, where unclean thoughts crawled like worms. It might be difficult. It might take a year. Still, on the other hand, it might be accomplished in a few moments. But whether it required a siege or a mere dexterous caress, she would do this thing.

Herod could no more have dissuaded Salomé from her yearning after John's head. In a single reflection the idea which had occurred to Viola had taken on the proportions of a mission. She would steal into Mr. Eddy's soul and survey it from within. Once inside, one admitted into those hideous corridors where lurked the seven deadly virtues, she would watch the strange undulations of this Mr. Eddy's soul. She would study the strange weird thing he called his conscience. She would take note of its sinister mechanics, its unctuous maneuvers. Then, when she had had her fill, she would crawl out again, take a breath of clean fresh air, and write a book entitled, "The Puritan."

Viola, of course, could write, even as she could play the piano. Hitherto life had been too full, however, to permit of much writing. Perhaps it was a sign of advancing age—this desire to write. One had to build for the future, though. She dressed gleefully. She hummed a little song all to herself. She looked out upon the winter's sunshine and was happy. She would ruin Mr. Eddy.

As the mission matured Viola suddenly felt herself well equipped for the business and was grateful, grateful to herself and to her world. She caressed her talents, joyed in her prowess, and experienced the keen, bubbling elation of one who deserts his wagon for the star. Life had abruptly popped into focus.

After all, she had been more or less a butterfly, healthy to be sure, and happy; but unproductive. Why not be all three, healthy, happy and productive? She would. She would ruin Mr. Eddy. Already she imagined the things he would say, the things he would do. She glimpsed the vile hypocrisies of the soul into which she was going to creep as into some roseate Promised Land. She repeated the thing over to herself, the mission. She would get inside of him. She would live inside of him. She would emerge from inside of him and write a book.

She was still repeating these things to

herself with whimsical comments, when she sat in the outer room of the Law and Order League, of which Mr. Eddy was one of the vice presidents. Mr. Eddy had not yet arrived. And it was ten o'clock. Viola pictured him arising in some sybaritic chamber. Ah, to be there! To watch the holy transfiguration! To observe the fellow passing from sin into a trance-like virtue! To see his halo in its lingerie! To note him stepping out of his pajamas into the shining, spotless armor of sainthood! To lie there and smile as the very odor of sanctity adjusted itself about him! To be the hyp in his hypocrisy! To know that he was suffering from a hangover headache as he sallied forth to spread the gospel of noble living through the world! To watch him anoint himself, to gaze upon the soul machinery at work, the alchemist's crucible which transformed the dross of Mr. Eddy's inner life into the gold of his outer self:

And then to write it all out in a book. There was work for a body. Viola's own soul gurgled. Every quivering nuance, each fountain head of philistia! She would track them all. As she thought these things Viola's hatred for Mr. Eddy was a cold clinical hatred—the hatred of the researcher for the disease he is seeking to combat. In fact, Mr. Eddy considered in the light of a disease, clarified matters for Viola.

He arrived at eleven. His step was brisk, certain; his demeanor benign and triumphant. He greeted Viola kindly, with a disgusting heartiness, a nicely shaded impersonal camaraderie. When he said, "Won't you be seated, please?" Viola was aware of an overtone—an harmonic in tune with the music of the spheres. When he remarked, "Wonderful day," Viola was conscious of a vague insinuation that the wonder of the day was the work of some pure mind akin to Mr. Eddy's.

There were other remarks, comments, queries, all of them possessing that ineffable air of radiance as if the goodness of Mr. Eddy's soul was a fixed strong light which shone through his simplest words. Viola's fascination increased. The manner in which the man's eyes rested upon her fascinated her. Ah, to get inside that soul! If Viola's soul had lips they would have smacked with anticipation.

"Yes," said Mr. Eddy, "I have had a wonderful morning. Dr. Jones and I visited the mayor early to protest against the New Year's Eve orgies. You know Chicago has stood for these amateur debauches long enough. I am glad to say that the mayor is a sensible, righteous man. He has agreed to shut the cafés and saloons at eleven o'clock on New Year's Eve. Isn't that fine? How many souls this will save is beyond our power of calculation. How many lives will avoid the snares of the devil and be rescued from entering upon the roads of vice is beyond us to say."

He smiled wistfully upon Viola. There was a slight confusion in Viola's brain. She imagined he gloated. She conceived a weird notion on the spot that Mr. Eddy gloated over the saving of souls in the same demoniacal manner in which a white slaver gloated over their destruction.

Viola shuddered and the lips of her soul, whose presence have been hypothetically established, became firm and hard.

"I would like to help in the work of the League," said Viola, "I have always been attracted by the work the Law and Order people were doing."

"Indeed," said Mr. Eddy, the totally unsuspecting Mr. Eddy. "There are a lot of things you could do. I didn't know you were interested enough. I am quite surprised."

Mr. Eddy registered surprise by agitating his thumbs, which he held in his lap.

"Oh," said Viola, "I am sort of tired of doing useless things. I would like to do something productive."

III

It was settled. Viola was given a desk in the offices of the Law and Order League, which were in the Y. M.

C. A. building. At this desk Viola planned campaigns for the salvation of certain souls, little souls without lips or anything, that lived in darkness. She worked diligently. Strange, impossible people hovered about her, women with long necks, men with unshaven though radiant faces. It was a quiet eager company, professional soul savers and débutante soul savers, snarlers and thunderers, unctuous tip-toeing Galahads, soap-box Messiahs, drawing room St. Johns. All of them bore the great Hate. Some hated the cigarette and hurled their wrath against it. Some hated liquor and these fought tirelessly, desperately, wrestling from dawn to dawn with the Demon. Others hated Sin, the sin of the brothel, the sin of the public park, the sin of the dancehall. They darted here and there ferreting it out, exposing it. They filled books with statistics. They were Voices in the Wilderness. They were indefatigable Knights of Purity. They caused the light of their souls to shine upon dark places. They dragged men and women out of this darkness.

There were others who constituted a bulwark for the great, careless public. These were the most active long-necked fellows, sharp-featured women, but goaded on by an avidity which even the Great Illuminators lacked. They were the shepherds of the flock. Their duty it was to see that none strayed, that none was tempted. Their mission it was to hunt down temptations and destroy them. Mr. Eddy was one of these. And Viola was of the group. She visited curious neighborhoods with Mr. Eddy, exhorting fat and diabetic Madams, pleading with lightly wrappered beauties. Mr. Eddy seemed never so happy as when in a brothel he turned his mellow, inspired syllables upon these daughters of joy. At such times his eyes glistened with a fire almost unearthly, his voice trembled with an unction sheerly divine.

Viola dispatched letters to police captains calling their attention to iniquities and violations in their precincts. With Mr. Eddy she worked, steadily, pleasantly. With him she journeyed into the haunts of evil and noted how he spread sweetness, hope and salvation.

At times a faint bewilderment suffused her. She felt herself living in some saccharine nightmare. When she recalled her great mission, the task had a whimsical awe about it. It would be a greater work than she had imagined, the book would be a greater book than she had dreamed. But she had decided to bide her time until more firmly established, to study Mr. Eddy from the outside first.

She was his right hand when he successfully conducted two campaigns which resulted in the withdrawal from two Michigan avenue art store windows of an oil painting called "Woman and Snake" and a statue called "Expectancy." She was his right hand when he suppressed a group of one-act plays produced by a Higher Drama organization. And she helped compose the open letter to the newspapers advocating the imprisonment of Theodore Dreiser. But when Mr. Eddy found time amid all these furious onslaughts to pluck brands from the burning at the rate of two brands a week, she could do no more than marvel.

IV

DURING this period of activity Viola's fascination increased. She surrendered herself entirely to every phase of her mission. She avoided Tony Jones, who had wrought with his own inspired hand the statue called "Expectancy," and who loved her. She returned the key of his studio to Arthur Swinburne, who had dedicated his last book of poems to her. Tony threatened to shoot himself. Arthur vowed he would join the army. Viola smiled grimly. She concentrated upon Mr. Eddy. For three weeks she conducted elusive attacks upon Mr. Eddy's rectitude.

She inveigled him into dimly lit rooms. She invited him to her apartment and sat him down in front of a real grate fire and turned on the victrola. She talked metaphysics to him in a low vibrant voice. She discussed

birth control with him, agreeing tremulously with his decision that the idea was indecent and demoralizing. She combed his hair once when he came to visit her after a walk through a blizzard. She insisted upon his removing his shoes and donning slippers. She discussed their work, dwelling upon the incredible, tireless sinfulness of the Brands, pointing out to him the manner in which these Brands tempted men, and the manner in which men tempted Brands. And once she went so far as to invade a picture postal store and confiscate in the name of the law an armful of cards. These she exhibited to him indignantly—with the fire burning merrily and the victrola haunting the background with a soft melody. He gazed at them with interest, shaking his head approvingly at her indignation and commending her joyfully over her success.

"We'd better burn them," he said when she had shown them all. "I think we have taught the man a lesson."

And he threw them into the fire.

These are some of the cruder things she did. The others, the more subtle maneuverings, hoverings, gaspings, gurglings, indefinable artifices, gestures, grimaces, smiles, accidental caresses, will not bear cataloguing. She worked swiftly and surely. She was never at a loss. She held her cheek close to his and touched him with her elbow as she knelt beside him in church.

But when the three weeks had passed Viola shook her head dubiously. She took a night off and went out and got drunk—pleasantly, exhilaratingly drunk—with Tony. His love making restored her confidence.

V

She returned to the offices of the Law and Order League with a new flush in her cheeks, a flush kindled by a reborn determination. She had achieved another conclusion. She had been working on the wrong track. Of course she couldn't ruin Mr. Eddy—for two reasons. One was that he was, perhaps, aware of something. She had, very likely, underplayed his cunning. Another and more probable reason was that she was too beautiful, too artistic, too refined. What Mr. Eddy's sort wanted was something vile, something without beauty, something vulgar and wicked.

It can be seen that at this point in the business Viola's mind had reached the lowest and most scurrilous depths concerning her employer. More than ever his sanctity reeked of subterranean vilenesses. More than ever she was avid to get inside his soul.

So she produced Gladys. Gladys came out of an abode of sin. Her cheeks were painted, her soul was black, her eyes were limpid, her caresses were for sale. her manners were horrible. Gladys was the logical destroyer of Mr. Eddy's virtue, not she—Viola. She brought Gladys to her apartment. She conducted Mr. Eddy thither. She explained to Mr. Eddy her latest undertaking.

Gladys had a widowed mother and consumptive brother. Gladys had struggled futilely against the sinister tides of life until she had gone under. But even now there was some purity left in her soul. She was sending home every week to her widowed mother a few of the dollars she earned in sin. These dollars provided for a doctor and food. This was the story that the garish and effulgent Gladys related to Viola. Viola related it to Mr. Eddy, lingering upon Gladys' present condition, her popularity in her sinister profession.

"You have stumbled upon a worthy case," said Mr. Eddy the next morning, "a most worthy case. I am certain that we can do something. We must do something. I have written to her mother."

Viola decided to work cautiously. She would not let the reborn confidence in the ultimate success disarm her. She employed a detective, a fellow with a red, lumpy face. She instructed the man to report to her every night after trailing Mr. Eddy's movements during the day. He did.

On the first night the detective, whose name was Mr. Scott, arrived at Viola's

apartment, as she was preparing to retire, and conversed with her in a low penetrating whisper.

"He went to the King's Hotel," said Mr. Scott. "It's a cheap, shady place."

"I know," interrupted Viola. "I picked it out for the girl."

"Well, he went there," resumed Mr. Scott, "about five o'clock in the afternoon. About two minutes after he got there the lady arrived. Blond hair and a red hat."

"That's right," said Viola.

"Thought so," said Mr. Scott. "I trailed them to room 212. They closed the door and were in there an hour. Then they came out together, and I followed them to a restaurant. He paid for the food. Then he took the dame back to King's and they shook hands. Then he left her there and went out north. Then—"

"That's enough," interrupted Viola, "come back tomorrow night."

VI

Mr. Eddy was more or less absent from the office for the next two days.

Mr. Scott, the detective, reported on the third night, out of breath. He spoke in a quick, fierce whisper. Viola listened attentively, eyeing the fire.

"And now," concluded Mr. Scott, rising and pacing, "we ain't got no time to lose. Here, look at this."

Mr. Scott handed Viola a piece of paper. On it was written:

"Dearie, meet me at 10 o'clock tonite at Kings—same room. Gladys."

"I copped it out of his overcoat pocket in the restaurant," exclaimed Mr. Scott triumphantly.

Viola sighed. A great wave of relief inundated her heart. She arose, and put on her furs and coat and gloves. Mr. Scott followed her. It was ten minutes to ten. King's was two miles distant. Viola resorted to a taxi.

In the cab she said nothing to Mr. Scott. All that the knowing Mr. Scott said was:

"I guess you've got the duck now."

He referred to Mr. Eddy.

They alighted a block from the hotel. They walked to the door.

"Make off you're drunk," said Mr. Scott.

Viola reeled slightly and clung to his arm. She had pulled a veil over her face.

Mr. Scott registered in the nondescript hotel ledger. He wrote Mr. and Mrs. Smith and winked at the clerk. Viola nodded approvingly at his elbow and reeled. They were shown to a room. The bell boy withdrew. He was an old bellboy, a disinterested bell boy. He thrust the quarter into his trousers pocket and withdrew. He did not see Mr. Scott and Viola tiptoeing from room 415 down two flights of stairs to room 212.

Outside the room Mr. Scott pressed a finger to his lips and his lumpy face assumed an air of great calm.

He looked at a watch.

"Ten thirty," he said, "just about right. I got a key."

He said these things in a slow whisper.

Before inserting the key he turned the doorknob cautiously. The door opened. Viola craned her neck around Mr. Scott's shoulder. There was a light burning in the room, near the bed. The light showed there were four people in the room. They were kneeling beside the bed. One of them was an old woman. She was weeping. One of them was a boy, pale and thin. One of them was Gladys, her hair disordered, her painted cheeks streaked with tears. The fourth was Mr. Eddy. They were kneeling in a row beside the bed. They were silent except for Mr. Eddy and he was barely audible. He was addressing an Unseen Being. He had his face raised as if in critical contemplation of the dingy shadowed ceiling. He was praying.

Viola saw and heard him pray. A panic gripped her, entangling her thoughts, weakening her legs so that she could hardly stand. Her heart contracted as if with fear. None of them appeared aware of Mr. Scott or of her. The old woman wept louder. The pale

boy buried his face deeper in his hands. Gladys began to sob. Mr. Eddy's voice rose in sterner, more elaborate prayer.

"And protect her, O Lord," Viola heard, "cause Thy light to shine upon her. Cause their little farm to yield abundance, and lead her in the ways of virtue and repentance. Give health to this boy, her brother. Give joy to this suffering old woman, her mother. Amen."

The row beside the bed chorused "Amen."

Mr. Eddy arose. Viola came forward. Mr. Eddy's face was shining, his eyes glistening.

"I didn't know," said Viola.

Her face was white, her eyes somewhat vague.

Mr. Eddy seized her hand and shook it. He smacked his lips. He heaved a triumphant sigh.

"I'm so glad you came," he said, "so glad. I've been so busy lately, planning such wonderful things. And everything has turned out as I prayed. God has seen to it. God allows no righteous prayer to remain unanswered."

He pointed to the group of three which had regained its various feet.

"Her family," he said, "her dear, sorrowing family. Mother and brother. I have gotten them a small farm from the Civic Garden Bureau. They are all going to live out there. They'll live there the rest of the winter and begin working it in the spring. Won't you, Gladys?"

Gladys came forward, her face shining. She spoke in the hoarse voice peculiar to sinners.

"Oh, Miss Carlow," she exclaimed, "thanks, thanks for everything."

She kissed Viola impulsively. Mr. Scott, the detective, disappeared . . . .

VII

THUS it was that Viola married him. An unreasoning incredulity inspired her, a morbid fascination, a curiosity. She went home that night escorted by Mr. Eddy. He kissed her hand. He seemed transfigured with goodness. He shone. When she got into bed Viola's head ached. She repeated to herself in the dark, "I'll get inside I will, I will. I must." She was slightly hysterical.

"It's worth it," she moaned to herself. "It'll make a wonderful book."

She fell asleep and awoke still determined to marry Mr. Eddy. She did . . .

He proposed to her on his knees and called her his white evangel and his guiding star! She gulped and said, "Yes."

He led her down a church aisle. The organ played, "Here comes the bride." Her mother wept and seemed entirely bewildered. Her father smiled and winked at Mr. Eddy, who was somewhat pale but vastly reserved. . . .

She married him and is still married to him. They have two children and are very happy. Viola has become enigmatic. Tony visited her only last week, Tony who had wrought the statue of "Expectancy," and who loved her. When he left he hunted up Arthur who writes poems. Tony and Arthur went to a café. They drank in silence and then Tony blurted out:

"God, I wish I could write, instead of making beastly figures."

Arthur looked at him morosely. They ordered another drink.

Tony blurted again:

"There's Viola, for instance. Hell, if I were a novelist, I'd get inside of her, yes sir. I'd get inside of her and that terrible ass husband of hers. And I'd come out and write a book about what I'd seen. It would be the book of the century."

Arthur nodded gloomily.

Tony continued to blurt:

"You remember her don't you . . . . Good Lord! . . ."

Arthur again nodded gloomily. He was tracing squares in the table cloth with his finger.

"Did you read that book she wrote?" he inquired, suddenly. 'Gladys-Lou's Road to Grace' . . . Of all the damned Puritanical mush! . . . "

"I remember her when—" blurted Tony.

They were quite drunk when they left the café.

NOT QUITE AN HOUR

By Mildred Cram

I

THE fast train, a long black banner of smoke streaming back over the roofs of the cars, rushed through a deep cut-out with a raucous clatter. Then it skimmed a meadow, roared across a trestle bridge that spanned a marsh and penetrated the hideous suburbs of a city.

In one often swaying Pullman a young woman raised the blind she had drawn against the blazing sunlight and stared out. She was weary of looking at the two rows of passengers, sitting in exhausted silence, their heads thrown back in attitudes of resigned boredom to the monotony of the landscape, the stifling heat, the slow-crawling hours. She was weary of staring at her husband, now comfortably asleep with his mouth open. She pressed her face against the window and watched the cardboard houses of the hideous suburb spinning by.

Presently the train lurched, slowed imperceptibly, made a wide curve into the bewildering intricacies of rail that thread their way to a great terminus, and then slid into the sooty shadows of a station. There were thundering reverberations of steam under the echoing roof, snorts, the clanging of bells, a rush of people along the platform under the window.

The young woman glanced back into the familiar aisle of the Pullman.

Some of the passengers, people who had traveled all the way from Chicago with her, were getting out. The old woman and her middle-aged daughter, who had sat just across the aisle, were putting on their hideous coats and hats and gathering up their canvas-covered suitcases.

An excited, shining porter hurried up and down the aisle, quarters jingling in his pink palm. He shouted with elaborate good manners:

"Overton! This is Overton, ladies and gentlemen. The train will wait here twenty minutes."

Overton! With a sudden contraction of her heart, the young woman glanced at her husband. Only one hour more and their honeymoon would be over . . . He was still asleep, his head thrown back against the square of hemstitched linen on the chair-back, his mouth open a little, showing his teeth.

She said to herself that with his eyes closed all she had liked in him was wiped out, like a slate rubbed blank with a sponge. With his eyes closed, she could find nothing of his coarse kindliness, his shrewdness. He looked sensual, absurd and commonplace. He breathed deeply, regularly, his hands still grasping the newspaper he had been reading. . . .

Overton! She leaned toward the window again and stared down onto the station platform. The shiny porter, with a gleam of gold in his wide smile, was possessing himself of the hand-luggage of two passengers who were boarding the train—a man and a woman—bride and groom, of course! A laughing, excited crowd of friends surrounded them, almost hid them.

The young woman in the Pullman could see the bride's radiant, tear-stained face as she kissed them, one after the other, good-bye. She was affectionately impartial, like a creature who has a great deal of love to give, a

pretty little thing, fragile and blond.

"Good-bye!" she cried, raising her voice courageously. "Good-bye, mother, and you, father, and all you other dears!"

And just then the woman at the window saw the groom's face. . . .

II

WHEN the grinning porter ushered the passengers into the Pullman and ostentatiously settled the newly married couple in the chairs across the aisle, the young woman was sitting with her back toward them. It looked like the polite indifference of good breeding. She heard the bride say with an hysterical little laugh,

"Kane, your hat-brim is full of rice."

She heard the porter's unctuous assurances,

"You-all give me the hat, suh, and ah'll shake it out in the corridor. Don' you-all worry, ma'am, no one in the car knows it's rice—they think it's the first snowfall of the season, yassuh."

And then the man's voice,

"The train's moving, Aileen—say another good-bye to everyone!"

They stood directly behind the other bride, their hands clasped on the back of her chair, smiling over the top of her head at the uplifted, happy faces on the platform. The train jerked, slid a foot or two, jerked again, then moved steadily forward.

"Good-bye! Good-bye! I'll watch out for her!"

"Good-bye!"

The young woman's husband woke with a start and rubbed his face sleepily, staring up at the young couple with half-open, quizzical eyes.

Suddenly he leaned forward and touched his wife's arm.

"Asleep, Kath? Say, here's another bride and groom. Just come aboard—see 'em?"

She shook her head.

"No, I must have been asleep."

He looked at his watch.

"Three o'clock. We are pulling out of Overton. Only another hour, thank heaven. Then we'll be home."

He leaned forward again and pinched her hand. "Glad to get home, Kath?"

She whispered, bending her head still lower,

"It has been a wonderful trip."

"Wait until you see the house I have built for you—white woodwork, parquet floors, nickel fittings, a little garden out in front, a big new touring car, christened Kathleen after you, a swimming-pool—"

He suddenly stared at her. "What's the matter? Don't you feel well?"

"I'm tired."

"Don't you want to talk?"

She met his eyes. They were angry and full of resentment.

"No," she said steadily, "I don't want to talk."

"Well, I'll be damned."

Her husband got up abruptly and reached for his hat in the rack overhead. "I am going out to the smoker. I'll come back for you before we get to Pershing City."

And then under his breath again:

"I'll be damned."

III

SHE did not even look up. She sat tensely, her shoulders drawn forward, her hands clenched in her lap, her eyes closed as if she were shutting out something she could not bear to look at. One hour more . . . One hour more . . . the wheels sang the tune endlessly. Could she keep her back turned to that other couple? Could she hide her face from them? Could she put her hat on and adjust her veil and get into her coat without once turning toward them?

Oh, if she only dared to face them! . . . Was she audacious enough for that? She had always believed that her courage was inexhaustible. One hour more . . . One hour more . . .

She heard the bride's excited voice behind her.

"Kane, you were too absurd while we were being married! You forgot the service. You mumbled. I had to prompt you every time—"

The man answered, laughing a little:

"I was thinking of the future—of that farm of mine, where I am taking you. I thought we were already there—I saw wheat, miles and miles of it, waving in the wind—and the big white clouds sailing across the sky. I forgot that I was being married. Queer, wasn't it? I forgot everything except that I was bringing a wife to my home."

"You love your home, don't you, Kane? I hope I am worthy of it."

"Oh, you're worthy, all right! Aren't you going to take your hat off? You look tired. Here, give it to me. Lean back and close your eyes a while. That's it. Rest, if you can."

"I will, if you don't mind, Kane. It has been so awfully exciting. . . ."

Then there was a silence and the train, made reckless by a long downgrade, leapt ahead like a flung spear. The blazing sun beat on the still roofs, against the shaded windows. Fields, streams, hills, farms, desolate villages rushed out of the horizon, spun past it, disappeared. The landscape flickered dizzily in the beating heat-fumes.

"One hour more," the wheels sang relentlessly, and then capriciously changing their theme, "Not quite one hour more, not quite . . ."

Inside, the two rows of passengers sat in strange, relaxed attitudes, pale, disheveled, bored, like people caught away from the world into temporary lifelessness, as if their existence, with its routine, its familiarities, its stationary earth, were mysteriously and indefinitely suspended.

The porter, his ebony mask glistening as he swayed up and down between the two rows of listless travelers, was the only one of them all who had no air of fixed anticipation, of dull anxiety, of utter fatigue. He passed with a whisk broom, with a glass of iced-water, with a cushion, with a fan—and his unsteady, perspiring progress was followed by all those eyes as if every move he made were strangely exciting and exhilarating in the hideous monotony of the hours.

Suddenly the young woman turned her chair around, facing the aisle, and looked directly across at the other bride's husband. He glanced up and met her look. And their eyes spoke.

She said:

"Yes, here I am! Here I am, your Kath, your sweetheart. And in not quite one hour more I shall be home. I shall be home—not at the farm, the one-storied wooden house you built for me, in the middle of a waving sea of wheat—but in a big house built of brick and stone, in the centre of a city. I am married to a contractor, an Irishman, who by some perverse trick of fate was denied the Gaelic streak of poetry. He is rich because he never took the time to dream. He is successful because he never stopped to pick flowers. He gives me everything—I want."

He said:

"You are still lovely. I have never forgotten the way your brows almost meet and the sullen curve of your lips and the beautiful line of your shoulders. This girl, sleeping here, is my wife. She is going with me to the house I built for you. She will ride your saddle-horse. She will pick the rambler roses I planted for you. She will be waiting for me when I come back across the fields at night. It will be her kiss, not yours, that wakes me in the morning."

She asked:

"Have you told her about me?"

He answered:

"Yes. She is sorry for you."

"Why is she sorry for me?"

"Because she loves me."

She asked:

"Is she jealous of me? Is she afraid of me?"

"No. The past is yours, but the future is hers."

"Have you told her the truth?"

"I told her simply that you left me."

The woman dropped her eyes. She glanced at the wedding ring on her hand. Then she looked up and met the man's gaze again.

"D'you remember the day we met? It was at a picnic—old home week, at your town up in New Hampshire. There were crowds of women in calico

dresses and hideous leghorn hats trimmed with lace and ribbons. There were gawky, pallid country boys in store clothes. Some of them played mouth-organs while we danced. The rest of them sat under the apple trees at one side and told smutty stories and giggled like little girls. How contemptuous I was! I was a city girl, born and bred to crowds, noise, fashion, glitter and progress. How I hated the red-cheeked women and the giggling, awkward men! I even felt superior to the village doctor and his wife, who were entertaining us. I wore a dress of violet linen, with a ribbon sash around my waist, and I knew I was prettier than all the rest of the women put together."

He said:

"We danced the Virginia reel in the orchard, and the tall grass was as high as our knees. We tripped and tumbled and shouted with laughter. Oh, it was fun! I remember the first time I ever really saw you. You came down the long line of clapping, perspiring bumpkins, in your violet linen with the ribbon sash, and I went to meet you. When you touched my hand, I saw you throw your head up, as if I had challenged you."

She said:

"Afterwards we went away from the others and sat on a steep bank by the river."

"I saw your lips and your straight black brows and your sullen smile . . . I dreamed . . ."

"Always dreams!"

"I dreamed out loud of a home set in the centre of a vast plain of wheat, and of you there with me."

"I didn't hear your dreams. I thought I could make you go to the city, in time. I was young; I was sure of my beauty."

He said:

"Presently I put my arms around your waist, and you bent slowly over to me, and I kissed you."

She said:

"D'you remember the day we were married?"

"You were beautiful."

"You took me to a desolate plain in Wyoming. You bought a farm and built a house. You went away at dawn to work in the fields, and came back after the stars had blown across the sky like sand. I stayed at home and washed and ironed and cooked. How I hated the silence! How afraid I was of it! I longed for the clang of trolley-cars, the beautiful sound of millions of feet on the pavements of my city; I wanted to wear pretty clothes and look in at glittering shop-windows and go to the theater, and dance. And all the time you dreamed of a farm, a big and a bigger farm."

He said:

"I remember the night you went away. You were waiting for me when I got back from the fields, the house was in order, the supper on the table, the lamp lit. You were pinning on your hat when I opened the door, and I saw your face in the mirror—white, excited, strange.

" 'Harness the team, Kane,' you said, 'I'm leaving you.' "

"I went over to you and seized you by your shoulders, whirling you around so that I could look at you."

" 'Leaving me? And why? Don't you love me?"

" 'Yes,' you said, 'I love you. But I'm no wife for a farmer. You had better let me go, or I'll kill myself. It's no use; you were born to the plain, I to the town. It will never be any different.' "

She said:

"You threatened me, you shook me, you kissed me, you pleaded with me. But in the end you harnessed the team and drove me to the station. D'you remember how the wind cut our faces, how the clouds piled up, how it rained? At the last, just as the train rushed out of the darkness, I threw myself in your arms:

" 'Come with me to the city!'

"And you said, 'Stay with me on the plains!'

"And neither of us would yield."

He said:

"Do you remember our kiss?"

"The last one! Tell me you loved me."

"I loved you."

"I love you now," she said.

He answered: "I will love always."

IV

THE porter, eager and smiling, hurried down the aisle. "Next stop, Pershing City! All ready for Pershing City!"

The woman stood up, reached for her hat and put it on, fumbling blindly to adjust her veil. She heard her husband's voice:

"Ready, Kath? I hope you're in a better mood. We're almost home. Look! Look out of the window! We're going through one of the suburbs now—Pershing Centre—pretty place, eh? I built most of the houses out here. Your coat—no, there's the sleeve—are you blind? Still feel tired, Kath? Your hat's crooked. Here, porter, brush me off—about a dollar's worth of dust on me, isn't there? Well, here it is! Take these two bags. That's it. Come on, Kath."

She hesitated: "Go ahead, please."

Her husband turned. "Just as you please."

She stood a moment, holding herself erect by clutching the back of the chair, looking down at the other bride. She noticed the pale, transparent skin, never coarsened or darkened by sun or wind. She noticed the delicate hands, the small waist, the slender feet in the high-heeled slippers. The girl was asleep, her lids heavy with fatigue. And the other woman met her husband's eyes again.

"Is she a city girl?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I wish you happiness."

She saw the look of fear that flashed into his eyes. Then she turned away. . . . *They had not spoken a single word.*

* * * *

Her husband was waiting for her. The train stopped and he swung himself onto the platform and stretched up his arms to her.

"Pershing City!" he said. "Home!"

ELF'S SONG

By John McClure

SHE came in the garden walking
When shadows begin to steal,
She trod upon a wing o' mine
And broke it with her heel.

She was a very queen, I think,
A queen from the West,
I should have only smiled
Had she stepped on my breast.

But I have told nobody,
I have told nobody yet!
I have told nobody—
Only the violet!

SHE WAS A SUCCESS WITH MEN

By June Gibson

SHE was a success with men.

. . . . . .

She could meet a handsome man without gazing at him aslant through lowered lashes.

She could dine without touching tall glasses of twinkling liqueur to her lips.

She could darn socks cleverly.

She could talk intelligently without employing the wiles of her sex.

She could dance without smiling with allure into the eyes of her partner.

She could tell of amusing happenings that did not border on the risqué.

She could appear well gowned without revealing the lines of her body. . . .

She could do all these things.

But didn't.

. . . . . .

She was a success with men.

DEFEAT

By Harold Cook

I CAN squander silver pennies for a silken thread
Or resurrected doubloons for a golden chain,
Or make a fairy palace out of dandelion blooms
Where little elves may hide them from the bright spring rain.

I can make a brawling trumpet from a blade of grass,
And by blowing on it make the Arabs rise and start,
By my magic is outwitted, for underneath a moon
You loosed your hair about me and made a vassal of my heart.

WHEN a pretty girl is kissed for the first time she closes her eyes in ecstasy. When she is kissed for the last time she closes them in horror.

DIVORCÉE: What most wives would be if they didn't possess a sense of humor.

THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

By ——— ———

VII

THE TRUTH ABOUT NEWPORT

I

NEWPORT is unique. It is neither Nice nor Mentone; Brighton nor Folkestone; Ostend nor Scheveningen; Deauville nor Dinard; Coronado Beach nor Atlantic City. It is Newport—*tout simplement*, the playground *par excellence* of the Summer idler whose pocket can afford it, the *milieu* of elegance and vulgarity in mordant contrast, the hotbed of extravagant vice, the burial grounds in which are interred the foolish hopes and ambitions of regiments of women craving for a place in the social sun.

The mausoleum of these ambitions are many and gorgeous. They line the beautiful avenues and behind the marble walls of many of them beat other anxious hearts, and many nervous fingers are weaving the same webs as their predecessors, which, like the web of Penelope, will only have to be unraveled and woven over again. Who, in remote places, that reads and dreams, in remote places where are born the first inklings, the first twitchings of social ambition, does not look upon Newport as the *ultima thule?*

How long ago it was that Newport won its supremacy is a matter of history that need not be repeated here. At any rate, it was some generations before hoop skirts; long, long before it was considered *comme il faut* for débutantes to stain their fingers with nicotine as the ladies of the seraglio do theirs with henna; long, long before George William Curtis tepidly satirized it in "Lotus Eaters," that then daring arraignment of the sins of society in the 50's; years before George Parsons Lathrop, in the manner of Maria Edgeworth, wove around it a spineless romance, and years before the advent of the Sunday supplements that loose upon it hordes of snoops to peep into the kitchen windows of the dwellers on the cliffs and tell what is going on in the drawing-rooms.

Whether in that time Newport has advanced or retrograded is merely a matter of personal opinion. Certainly it has not retrograded in the eyes of those whose vision is concentrated on society. It is, beyond peradventure, the demesne of the Lotus Eaters. It is always afternoon at Newport—not the afternoon of Tennyson, but the busy, bustling afternoon of the twentieth century multimillionaires who have reared with their magical gold their magical palaces of marble and porphyry and alabaster.

In many instances they have been reared almost as miraculously as the palace of Aladdin. Take one as an example. In a single year, on a barren plot of ground, sprang up a regal abode in the midst of gardens that might have had a century in maturing. Stately elms of venerable age were transferred from their natural habitat, flowering shrubs in full growth were made to flourish as though they had sprouted there and had known no other soil; hedges that ordinarily required years

to bring to perfection flourish along the sanded pathways; fountains play into basins that once graced the gardens of Roman nobles. The interior of the house, the architecture of which was borrowed from France, teems with priceless objects of art collected by highly paid connoisseurs. The cost was enormous. The achievement rivaled Louis XIV with the palace of Versailles. The châtelaine of this regal abode is the daughter of a fishmonger. Ten years ago she was unknown. Even six years ago she trembled in her first tentative steps on the first round of the social ladder. Now the whole world—the whole world of the smart set—clamors for entrance at her doors.

True, it was not through the humble though honourable calling of purveying fish that *paterfamilias* accrued the pactolean sand which has made possible all these wonders, that changed the ugly duckling into a swan of alban hue. There were certain transactions in politics—but that is a story that need not be told here.

II

THE present era of extravagance and display at Newport traces its origin to that arch *poseur* of the ending days of the last century who was unconsciously responsible for that alluring but dubious quota, the 400. Obsessed by vanity and the *manie de grandeur* he sowed there the seed of ostentation which in the fertile soil of rapidly accumulating millions germinated readily, and fructified as what we now have as our upper class, the class which possesses in startling measure all the vices of older civilizations in the raw state. One might well wish "the dead could tell just when to come back and be forgiven." One doubts, however, that in this instance, the "when" has yet arrived for this apostle of snobism to return and receive the truisms of those among us who have not followed the course he laid down.

Still, the fact confronts us that he laid out the garden in which Newport as it is today flourishes. There were gay times in the days when the guest of a great personage rode his polo pony into the sacrosanct portals of the Reading Room, and himself out of it, but the gaiety was sane. What skeletons there were were kept securely in their closets. Now they dance their *danse macabre* at every feast and the painted ladies who look upon the performance as a part of the day's program smile through their carmined lips with cynical satisfaction. The amours of the opulent host are more or less openly commented upon by the guests at his own dinner table and the playful act of an obfuscated officer in the service of the Nation slapping a lady on her bare shoulder is dismissed with an admonishing "naughty boy!" The string of pearls the hostess wears is not *sans reproche* and the fact comes out with the bubbles in the champagne. The daughter's infatuation for an elderly benedick is seasoned by the *foies gras aux truffes*. And so it goes in the general arrangement of Newport as the result of the influence of that unconscious originator of the 400.

It was pique at the manner in which the old gentlemen of the Reading Room —God rest their souls, most of that generation being now in the realms of the blest or in "melancholy, moonless Acheron"—treated the escapade of the effervescent youth who rode his horse into that sanctuary that incited the building of the Casino by his host. Gay sport that he was at that time, some thirty or forty years ago, he said that he would have a place where action should be free, alike for the dwellers in Bellevue avenue and for the proletariat. He caused to be erected the long, low line of buildings that face the Avenue and now exclude from the curious eyes of the local Jehus (who loaf and wait for fares on the opposite side of the roadway before the grey stone house that was once his home) what goes on in the great quadrangle within that is the morning rendezvous of all Newport.

For some twenty-five years the dem-

ocratic ideas of the originator of the scheme held sway. The tradesmen of Thames Street, who might be called the burghers of Newport, and their daughters and their sons were free to enter and enjoy the music of the morning concerts or the play of tennis experts on the several courts on a small price of admission.

But within recent time all this has been changed. The populace may no longer enter except on Sunday night, when a lachrymose concert is offered as an inducement. The autocrat who brought about the change is an autocrat indeed—in his own small way. He is, alas, not above criticism. His own daughter repudiates him because, to her way of thinking, he replaced her mother in the household with an inferior person—and for money.

Still, you may wander into the Casino —with proper credentials—see much that is going on and—hear the rest.

In a certain small way the Newport Casino is unique. It is perhaps the only place in existence where it is necessary to present a visiting card and be announced by a club flunky before you may enter the shops within the grounds. It may be that in a measure the precaution is a protective one. The amiable ladies who detail with much gusto during the morning concerts all the happenings of the afternoons, when the Casino is practically deserted, tell strange tales of certain Newport shops. For instance, there was the beautiful proprietress of one of them—a fashionable woman from a nearby New England city with more ambition to shine in what the dressmakers call French creations than her purse permitted.

I am breaking no confidence in offering this particular instance as an example of the morals of Newport. Beautiful beyond question, born to the purple—if not of the deepest Tyrian dye, at least purple—and favoured by fate with a somewhat useless husband who could or would not do much toward buying tulle dresses for his débutante daughter nor cloth of gold robes that were fitting for the balls his wife would attend at the marble palaces in Bellevue avenue, what could the poor lady do but look out for herself?

This she did by taking up a profession. The profession is immaterial, though suffice it to say that it was not ostensibly the oldest one in the world. Indeed, on the face, it was quite a nice profession, but it necessitated a shop.

It was a particularly gay season. War had not yet disturbed the equanimity of the smart set, and the German Eagle, the Russian bear and the British lion still dined and wined in amity together. Bellevue avenue bristled with gay young diplomats from morn till night, from night till morn. Of all the gay places of meeting none was gayer of an afternoon than the little shop.

The initiated included those who in the good graces of the fair proprietress were permitted to have rendezvous there with favoured friends—for a consideration. It was all quite *comme il faut*. No one could find anything to criticize in the exquisitely artistic externals of the place and its air of elegance perfumed with oris and the incense of Russian cigarettes. All that spelled perfection. But, *au fond—!*

The propinquity of the Casino club facilitated the acquisition of all the extraneous spirits necessary for the promotion of geniality, and the parties often assumed a colourful and cheery state such as the frequenters could permit at home only on the occasion of great gatherings. It made possible the commingling of kindred spirits that for one reason or another found their commingling at other places hedged in with difficulties. And those who profited most were certain ladies of the grateful age whose husbands, slipping into the lean or slippered pantaloon, had lost taste for the persiflage that makes the youngsters so charming and desirable.

Even in Newport, however, it was not to be expected that this delightful retreat could escape the tongues of the gossips and run a halcyon course to

the end of the season. The dowagers who foregathered for the morning concerts soon got wise, to use a colloquialism much admired of the Long Island set, and the caustic comment that fluttered about in the shadow of the crescent band pavilion was both pertinent and diverting. It did not cause the subject to capitulate and leave Newport. It did not even curtail her adventure. But it is a pertinent fact that she did not return the following season, nor has anyone else followed in her footsteps.

In this she emulated the young matron who set out to astonish the summer capital with a *bal masqué* at the Clambake Club of a Saturday night. She succeeded beyond her wildest hopes, for never since has she had the temerity to launch there a similar, or any other affair. The Clambake Club, like the Golf Club, is so far removed from the center of town that what goes on there seldom reaches the outside world. It is only those who have the open sesame of introduction who may tread the asphodel fields and primrose paths that abound there. Consequently it was there the young matron staged the most spectacular and most talked about and criticized affair of recent years.

The Clambake is not a commodious place. The building is insignificant. It is used only for entertainments and is not at all a club in the popularly accepted sense of the word. Only its remoteness appeals—as might be amply and picturesquely attested by the rocks along the shore that, after many a dance given there, in the grim gray of next morning show much mute evidence, in shreds of tulle and ends of frazzled ribbons, in a withered flower, a bit of tousled lace or a dropped handkerchief, that many of the beautiful guests love to linger long and court laryngitis on the shore rather than woo terpsichore in the tented ballroom.

On the night in question the revelry was wild. It ran the gamut from G below to G above the staff. The *crême de la crême* of Newport was there. Much of the *crême* was curdled, or, I might say, addled, which is, in a measure, the same thing.

Morning dawned long before the revelers had had enough, and Jupiter Pluvius wept—actually—to see such sights. Certain of the guests, headed by a band hastily got together, betook themselves to the Golf Club, miles away, where early churchgoers motoring along the Ocean Drive saw them—a grotesque company of harlequins, pierrettes, cowboys, Spanish senoritas—what not—straggling over the green and making futile drives at bunkers which did not exist.

At the same time the pious churchward bent along Bellevue avenue beheld a procession of motor cars burdened with tinsel and flying flags; women with rumpled and straggling hair; men heavy-eyed and raucous, their costumes sagging in the drizzle. Never before had Newport beheld such a spectacle. The whole town was aghast. The gossips screamed, the press chimed in and even the pulpit took notice. The commotion was worse than when a popular divine from the pulpit of Newport's sanctified Trinity Church hurled anathema at divorce while sitting under him listening to his tirade were some of the pillars of society and best patrons of the parish, several of whom boasted at least two unsuccessful matrimonial ventures.

The best of it was that the host of the blowout never paid the bills until he was more or less gently pressed by the velvet glove of the law.

III

HOWEVER, I would not cast upon this young host the opprobrium of being the only one at Newport whose festival degenerated into an orgy. In fact, so few of them do not reach the limit of license that those rare instances stand out in glowing colors. It is by no means rare to see couples who find the heat of the ballroom too overpowering deserting for long motor trips around the Ocean Drive, maids and matrons alike,

and returning when the orchestra is sounding the first strains of "Home, Sweet Home," the maids to seek their sleepy chaperones and the matrons their husbands, who, more than likely are found distributed throughout various rooms in the more or less picturesque abandon of somnolence.

Nor is it always at balls and routs that such scenes take place. The most magnificent dinner parties in the most splendiferous palaces on the cliffs and along Bellevue avenue begin with all the solemn pomp of a state banquet and wind up in glorious inebriety both above and below stairs. It is anything but pleasant and a commentary on the American 400. Also it may be the natural corollary of enormous wealth acquired over night, as it were, and that raises, in the twinkling of an eye, the proletariat to the plutocracy.

All society remembers more or less poignantly the famous dinner given by Mrs. Pumpkins preceding a much talked about costume ball, when Tom Lightweight came so drunk that he became ignobly ill with the soup course and had to be literally carried from the table by two servants. And this was not all.

The dinner was given for the sole purpose of blighting the ball, and it succeeded. Mrs. Pumpkins and Mrs. Spotlight were rivals for that leadership left vacant—and incidentally never refilled. When Mrs. Spotlight's invitations for the ball came out and the noise of its intended splendour was bruited about, Mrs. Pumpkins was piqued. She saw, or imagined she saw, herself eclipsed. To give a similar entertainment on the same night were impossible; it would be confessing her rancour and placing everybody in the delicate position of making a choice. She hit upon the dinner at which the hostess of the ball should be the guest of honour and to which should be bidden the most important of Mrs. Spotlight's guests. The famous swan dinner about which Ward McAllister has raved was a niggardly snack compared with this prandium. Everything that could delight the eye and the palate was assembled, and by the time the feast was finished more than two-thirds of the guests had succumbed to the cheer and wished that they could be carried away like Tom Lightweight or that the lavish hostess had to her entertainment the peacock feather that accompanied the Neronian feasts.

It was a sorry lot that showed up at Mrs. Spotlight's ball and looked at her supper with the sensation of having taken a dose of ipecac. And even that lot comprised but a part of Mrs. Pumpkins' dinner guests. The others were *hors de combat* and might still be slumbering amid the ruins of the feast —the overturned wine glasses, the faded and disarranged flowers, the dead cigarette butts, the rumpled napery stained with coffee and liqueurs—had not the housemaids come with their brooms and swept them all out.

The affair was the talk of the Reading Room next day, when some of the saner ones among the convives of the night before managed to appear at that famous club, where the brilliant young multimillionaire, Reginald Dashit, may be found at almost any hour with a cocktail in each hand, and the barman mixing more for him. As a sensation it outranked the episode at the dinner of the coal baron in Bellevue avenue a few nights before, when Jack Dumleigh playfully slapped Mrs. Claggit on the bare shoulder with a whack that resounded from one end of the room to the other, and left a bright red mark on her alabaster skin.

The Reading Room! Another institution of Newport that is unique. It is the male casino, the clearing house of gossip. The red, masculine corpuscle that is supposed to scoff at and scorn small talk does not dominate the Newport Reading Room. It is an insignificant building whose externals would not suggest that it is possibly the most exclusive club in America; that on its piazza, usually lined with rows of magnates of finance and society, is the ground upon which social positions are made or unmade.

It is the chatter-place of the polite world, where such men as old Colonel Seacomer befuddle themselves and tear to tatters the reputation of every human between Brenton's Reef and Miantonomi Hill. But one woman has ever crossed the threshold and but one newspaper representative, the woman because, the story goes, she fainted at the gate and was carried into the hall to be revived; the newspaper man was taken in by a famous coal baron, so rich and mighty that the liberty he took was overlooked, but it was intimated politely that he must never do it again, and he did not. He fared much better than the New York woman who dared to take a representative of one of the most important American daily papers to the Golf Club.

Poor dear, she paid the penalty for her *faux pas*. She was not a power. She was one of the ambitious climbers who had got a fair foothold, through the generous use of her pocketbook, through dusting up Bellevue avenue with her own lily white hands, through polishing the boots of the mighty, at bottom no better than herself, with her own rosy tongue. She was tolerated. She would bow semi-familiarly to Mrs. Midas and called Mrs. Jason by her first name. But she committed the awful sin of taking a reporter to the Golf Club.

She was not handled delicately, politely, as was the coal baron at the Reading Room. She was told in brutal terms, such as might be used by the dictator of an East Side political club banishing a youngster, that she had committed an unpardonable offence. She never returned to the Golf Club. She never returned to Newport.

IV

UNTIL a year ago it was the custom of the Reading Room to give to the officers of the navy stationed at Newport the "courtesies" of the club free of charge. The idea was not altogether altruistic. During the summer season Newport has been for years the rendezvous of the North Atlantic squadron, which takes probably the preponderant number of the graduates from the Naval Academy at Annapolis. When the season is on the town is crowded with midshipmen who now rank as second lieutenants, and it was no secret that the governors of the club looked to this annual influx of giddy youth to make up the constant yearly deficit in the club budget. They did it, but somewhat to the detriment of the young subalterns and the dignity of the navy.

But it was a very nice thing to be invited to enjoy the privileges of this exclusive organization. It was a flattering thing that the wily dictators of the club realized would play upon the imagination of the youth who would not understand that they were to bridge the invariable gap in the finances that the members were reluctant to dig into their own pockets for. Though platitudinous to say it, it is nevertheless the truth that youth always has been and always will be flattered by the notice and attentions of its elders. The subtlety of the appeal to join the big frogs in the small puddle was irresistible, and the youngsters plunged in with all the enthusiasm of their young blood. The result was droll. The club accomplished its ends, but at such an expense to the dignity of the service that last year the admiral of the fleet was compelled to issue an edict excluding all the officers under a certain rank from accepting the courtesies of the exclusive hosts.

It was a veritable Cæsarian operation, but it was successful. No longer do we see the junior officers of the navy rolling out of the club at all hours. Of course exclusion from the Reading Room did not put an unsurpassable ban on either drinking or card playing. But shorn of the glamour of exclusive selectivity the pleasant vices of inebriety and chasing the tiger had not the same seduction. The famous club in Bath Road, where the stakes run too high for the resources of the ordinary subaltern, was out of the ques-

tion, and they hesitated at the threshold of joints where plutocrat on hilarity bent and proletariat plunging its wage meet on common ground.

Like master, like man. The gambling instinct is as strong in the man as it is in the master. At Newport it is exemplified in its basest degree at a place where the possession of millions, of estates on the Avenue, of yachts in the harbor, of thoroughbred horses and fleets of motor cars meet and pit stakes with their butlers and valets. It is hardly an elevating sight to see Mr. Midas, with whom you have dined the night before, pitting his stakes against the pompous butler, who had passed you the *vol au vent* on a gold salver.

At this place it is customary for the men who are too drunk, or for some other reason do not wish to show up at the smarter rendezvous, to drop in along two or three o'clock. In the general room, where the stakes are low enough to seduce the humble servitor and the air reeks with the odors of stale tobacco and the fumes of cheap whiskey, they chase the roulette ball to the limit and frequently are literally carried home by their own servants with whom they have been playing. I have seen there repeatedly one man whose name is almost a household word wherever society columns are read. He is a man of family, and although not looked upon by society as an exemplary person, he at least occupies a position that strugglers envy. His wife is a leader in the sense in which the word is accepted. His play is never high. He never goes into the small room reserved for plungers. He prefers the *milieu* of the smoke, heavy, common, and the companionship of the chauffeurs, valets and second men gathered there. They all speak to him familiarly and he "sets them up" all around in a freely democratic if not distinguished way. Usually his hour of departure is four in the morning and if he has been lucky he has probably won fifty dollars. He is not a modern Al Raschid. He is not delving into the slums to find out what his people are doing. He does it because he likes it; because he prefers the shambles to the drawing-room.

Is madame, his wife, doing much better? You may take your choice, for she is amusing herself with a secretary whose claim to distinction is a natty appearance and a plethora of small talk. She has abandoned her children —all mistakes which she regrets—to the care of servants and while she makes merry above stairs they are consorting with and absorbing the morals and conditions in the servants' hall.

I have in mind a concrete example. Madame is the wife of the man referred to above. She is beautiful, vain, elevated through vast wealth to a position that she was not born in. Her marriage never would have been sanctioned by the eugenists of the present day. It took place before eugenics were heard of, or at least generally known. The result was children which come in the ordinary course of marital events. Two of these unfortunate offsprings, while not exactly imbecile were —well, mentally deficient. Did she nurture these two with that care and love of maternal instinct? No. They were turned over to hirelings to be brought up in any way those hirelings saw fit while their mother pursued the social conflict. Today she is one of the most quoted women in New York and Newport. When she appears at the opera it is an event upon which the newspapers comment. When she gives an entertainment at Newport the poor sheep who are ambling determinedly after the bellwether break their necks to get invitations and spend nights of ineffable, sleepless bliss if they succeed.

It is not pleasant but it is true.

V

Such are some of the people who are held up as social leaders, such are some of the people who make the name of Newport famous. Such are some of the people that the strugglers struggle to know. Such are some of the people that lure the millionaires from all points of the compass—millionaires

who will swallow snubs, insult, ignominy in order to scrape up a bowing acquaintance. By any devious pathway and none is too hard or rugged to tread, they will climb, spending, spending all the time, fawning, grovelling, snivelling, abject, soapy, prostrate. And when they have achieved it they find there only an empty shell. The kernel has long since shriveled up and died.

But after all, there is a part of it that is not bad. However that is the part of which we never hear. It lives in an atmosphere of lavender and rose leaves. Its doings are sane, hence they pass unrecorded. Nor is it dressed in cloistral grey or bombazine. It is good, so its example is unheeded.

THE SORROW SUPREME

By Elsie McCormick

THE soldiers were going away.

Their sweethearts clung to them in last, desperate farewells; then waved tear-soaked handkerchiefs as the train pulled slowly out of the depot. All were plumbing the depths of tragedy; but one girl, standing alone, was crying harder than any of the others.

People turned from their own sorrow to wonder at her. But she wept on, unheeding. Her grief was too deep for concern as to what the passing world might think.

She was crying because she had no one to cry over.

THE ARTIST

By John Hamilton

WHEN I married her, her cheeks were the tint of the cherry blossom and her throat was smooth and white and she smiled with the radiance of a June mid-day.

I am an artist.

She toiled that I might succeed.

She ate little, slept little, worked with her hands . . . . asked for nothing.

The other day she died.

It was well—

If she had not died I would have killed her.

She had become very ugly.

I am an artist.

OLD MAN MILO WINS

By L. M. Hussey

I

WHEN I first met Old Man Milo he had a paper bag in one hand and was working his jaws vigorously.

At first I thought he was chewing tobacco. The warrant for this impression was had in several moist streaks which projected downward from his nether lip. But I observed him remove a large mountain-shaped object from the paper bag and perceived then that he was engaged in the consumption of chocolate creams.

"That," said my friend Haynes, "is old Man Milo."

I lifted my eyebrows and smiled.

"Old Man?"

"Absolutely!"

Milo glanced up at us as we passed him and I noticed a curious gleam appear in his eyes as he recognized Haynes. But no word of greeting came from his lips.

"He is not very loquacious," I remarked, after we had put some fifty feet between ourselves and him.

"No, there is only one topic upon which Milo will talk."

"And that?"

"I'm going to leave *that* to your discovery. You'll find out soon enough for yourself. As a matter of fact, I know it is certain you'll see plenty of Old Man Milo. Old Man Milo will have a weakness for us."

I might have asked more questions about the Old Man but I was excessively tired and a little blue. We had done two hundred and fifty miles in a motor since the preceding day and we'd been stuck sixteen times in the mud holes of the spring roads, and pushed ourselves out, only to be stuck permanently for the seventeenth time six miles from home.

We walked the six miles. Just now, the house was a delightful sight to me, several hundred yards ahead.

But the place was cold and damp when we went in; it had been unoccupied since the preceding summer. We chopped wood, built a fire, and within an hour went to bed.

The next morning I felt any amount more like myself.

Also, Old Man Milo called.

Milo entered the door without the formality of a knock. He glanced at me perfunctorily and he fastened his eyes upon the countenance of my friend. I saw that his face had a curious incrustation, suggestive of white sand and glue—a closer scrutiny made me convinced that this was, in greater probability, bread-crumbs and molasses.

I was attracted more particularly, however, by the appearance in his eyes of that curious stare which had caught my notice on our initial meeting.

Knowing better now its significance, I might say that the fixity of his gaze, that so puzzled me then, was chiefly in quality a gloating expectation, a covetous desire.

"Hello, Milo!"

Milo said nothing.

"Hello, Milo." (I repeated the salutation Haynes had given.)

"Have you got. . . ." began Milo.

"Why, yes, of course," Haynes interrupted him. "Just wait a moment."

He retired to the kitchen while Milo turned on a pivotal base to follow him with his eyes.

Old Man Milo's glare grew almost portentous. I was puzzled. There was a certain mystery to this procedure.

My friend returned, holding in his hand a double slice of bread, from the middle of which dropped unguent globules of maple syrup.

But Milo's eyes held for me still a greater attraction.

I am almost at a loss to give an impression of his optical quality when, dropping from the face of my friend, his eyes fastened themselves on the doubled bread.

I have seen something of the look pictured of misers regarding their hoards and something also of a similar glare from ravenous lions at their zoo feeding hour. I might say, in fine, that the look had in it an admixture of these both and an ineluctible extra something peculiar to Milo.

Then removing his singularly fixed stare, Milo's hands were raised for the deposition in them of the double slices of bread.

For a second, he held them motionless, then with a rapid movement, accompanied by an audible intake of breath, he conveyed the slices to his mouth, severing with his teeth a semicircular bite several inches in radius.

I could see that during the process of feeding himself, Milo, the Old Man, was utterly oblivious to all other concerns. I took the opportunity therefore to scrutinize him in detail.

I should say that his shoes were not more than five sizes too big. He wore overalls, with a tuck at the bottom extending approximately to his knees. Over his shoulders was draped an amorphous garment, suggestive, to imaginative minds, of a coat.

I turned to Haynes.

"How old is the Old Man?"

"Discounting his precocity, I should estimate—five years."

"Am I getting the expression of the gentleman in his characteristic mood?"

"More than his characteristic mood. You are seeing Milo in essence. You are seeing Old Man Milo!"

I glanced at Milo again. His power of deglutition was astounding. The semicircular removals from the bread had reduced it to one-third its original dimensions.

"That is his particular preference?" I questioned.

"Preference?" (My friend knitted his brows and studied for a second.) "That's a little difficult. Milo will eat anything—that is, anything he can chew. And his teeth are remarkably strong. However, I might say that if he prefers anything, it is candy."

Milo had completed the syruped bread with a return of his previous gloating expectancy.

Haynes met his eyes and slowly shook his head.

The light faded gradually from Milo's face and his glance became a little furtive.

He perfunctorily looked over several objects in the room and then turned slowly.

"Guess I'd better go," said the Old Man.

He acted quickly on his resolution and passed out of the door, leaving it slightly ajar.

Thoughts of Old Man Milo didn't come to me again until late in the afternoon. This may seem a little singular—there were enough peculiarities about Milo to keep any one, on initial acquaintance, thinking of him, off and on, all day.

But our circumstances were exceptional. Without any great amount of experience or skill at our command, we were endeavoring to get the house habitable enough to live in all summer. And for me, too, there was the strangeness of new surroundings.

So I thought of Milo again when we made our first visit to the store. Quite congruously, the impression of him lit up again in my mind on the espial of a case of candy. There occurred to me the thought that it would be a benevolent act of hospitality to purchase an assortment from the case, to lay up against Milo's next appearance.

I went back with a large bag.

And Milo entered, unannounced,

shortly after seven the next morning.

On this occasion he assumed a greater geniality. He greeted Haynes with a smile—but still retained his perfunctory attitude toward me.

"I'm a little hungry," he suggested, presently.

So I produced the bag of candy.

From this moment, you must credit an utter shift of Old Man Milo's allegiance.

At first I didn't quite appreciate this truth—I certainly got none of its sinister implications.

When I thrust the bag upon Milo, he did not look at me. The more immediate matter took all his eyes. It is almost necessary to say he gloated. His gaze dripped anticipation.

With nearly an ecstasy audible in the intake of his breath, Milo put a single and dubiously-hued hand into the very core of the contents. For a moment he fingered in the interior, made an extraction at last which he brought rapidly within reach of his tongue.

So far, you perceive, Milo had given no sign of the human agency by means of which the sudden largess of the bag had come upon him.

The first notion of Milo's changed attitude came to me only after the bag had reached the point where it could be blown up with air (Milo's face failed to show even a faint erythema during the process, under the concealing tan of esculents coating it) and burst with a report by a thrust from the clenched fist.

Then Old Man Milo, slowly rubbing his two hands downward against his overalls, looked at me.

Haynes crossed the room at the moment. He came between Milo's eyes and my face, and I noticed with a start that Milo's head remained static; his eyes met my face with a steady persistency.

"I like them," said Milo suddenly. "Have you got any more?"

"No," I told him. "I'm sorry, Milo. Perhaps this afternoon . . ."

"I guess I'd better be going," said Milo.

I turned to Haynes as Milo shut the door behind him.

"There's a phrase Clemens uses in one of his tales that comes back to me now with a particular pungency, Haynes."

"In reference to the Old Man?"

"Yes, it makes a perfect application. You recollect the story of the starving man he met—wasn't it in the silver mines of Nevada? He called him 'a walking allegory of hunger.'"

Haynes laughed.

"I see you're getting at the bottom of Old Man Milo. You don't find him so particularly complex after all, eh?"

"I don't know," I said dubiously. "There may be some vast significance in Milo's characteristic. The birth of a new biologic type. . . . At any rate, there's an anatomical wonder. There's an unspeakably perfected digestive functioning. If I were a man of science I'd be greatly tempted to put him on the table and cut him open. Surely it would be interesting. Surely his alimentary system is something more than ordinary. Believe me, there's a mystery to be got at in Old Man Milo's interior."

II

In the afternoon I purchased another, and somewhat larger, I think, bag of candy.

Milo by no means failed to recollect. He must have been watching somewhere along the road. We hadn't been in the house five minutes when he appeared, framed picturesquely between the door and the light.

Now I realized who it was at last held the top hole in Milo's estimation. The perfunctory and wandering glance which before had been bestowed upon me was now Haynes' portion. And I received his fascinating attention.

A slight shiver titillated the muscles of my back as I observed his immovable eyes upon my face.

I was beginning to find his gaze of gloating anticipation uncanny and even unreal. It was not natural to me that anyone could attain in a glance—and

sum up there an entire character—such an exclusive singleness of purpose.

Milo's eyes had something of that dreadful fixity of desire which one may observe in the course of paranoia.

Again I gave him the candy. In five minutes he blew up the bag.

That night I dreamed a little, but terrifying, dream of Old Man Milo.

It seemed to me that in some fashion Milo had become my tyrant. So soon as this was established he set me to the accumulation of a vast store of these varied candies which I had been handing him in paper bags. I remember working with a desperation born out of fear that I could never meet his capacity. The stores I collected filled tremendous bins. They grew until I had stuffed a dozen cement storage tanks.

And Milo appeared and opened his mouth and the bins and tanks were empty!

And Milo turned his eyes upon me malevolently.

I awoke, perspiring.

That morning I hurried through breakfast. I dreaded the Old Man's possible appearance. There was no candy in the house. It seemed inconceivable to me that I could meet his eyes set upon my face and not counter with a paper bag.

A good fortune favoured me. We got over to the store and I made an exceptional purchase.

When we returned, Old Man Milo was seated on the threshold, waiting.

As the days passed I perceived what a dreadful nemesis I had, through my own inadvertence, fastened upon myself. A summer of malaise and anxiety stretched before me. Haynes was a composer. I was a would-be composer. But even would-be compositions must seriously be disturbed by Milo's persistently periodic appearance.

It was not so much, you understand, Milo's simple materialization which worried me. I was profoundly disturbed by the underlying and subtle uncanniness—the something almost diabolic that sprung into my mind with the recollections, after each fresh visit, of Milo's fixed, unreal eyes.

The thing I finally plotted seems miserably cold-blooded, I suppose. I almost despair getting any of your sympathy or even a little of your intellectually detached understanding. You see, you never saw Milo's eyes.

But whatever you may think of me, I might as well attempt no concealments.

I plotted against Milo!

Understand, he was a nemesis. He was forever on hand. I encountered him suddenly in strange places. Crossing the fields, he would spring out from a hayrick and spell me with his eyes. He materialized behind trees in the woods. He was found waiting on the doorstep when I entered the house.

I plotted against Milo's constitution. I determined to render him bilious for life.

However adamant and perfect, I reasoned, might be Milo's system of alimentation, there must be *somewhere* a limit.

It was late in the evening, for the execution of my plan, that I appeared at the store.

"How much candy have you got?" I inquired.

The shop-man pointed to his case.

There were in bulk probably several buckets of assorted cheap candies.

"I'll take the whole business," I said.

The man packed the stuff in an empty nail-keg for me.

I scarcely slept that night.

I looked for Milo, for the first time, with a pleasurable anticipation.

He came in, and not permitting myself to become fascinated with his eyes, I rolled the keg into the room.

"Go ahead, Milo," I said.

III

Milo left shortly before noon.

For several hours in the early afternoon I went through a period of elation. But this imperceptibly became shadowed with something else which I finally perceived to be—remorse!

After all, the years of the Old Man should have saved him from such a plot as I had put into execution.

I went to bed worried. I slept poorly. I visioned Milo tossing sick throughout the night. I was filled with contrition and pitied the Old Man.

Possibly you expect me to say that the Old Man Milo appeared the next morning and demanded another keg of candy, so making a humorous denouément to the story.

But unfortunately, what I plotted to happen, occurred. The news came that Old man Milo was seriously ill.

As I recollect, he was in bed something over two weeks. I developed a slink. After darkness fell I would furtively steal down the road and stand outside Milo's residence. I was afraid to go in. I don't know to this day whether Milo's folk connect me with his constitutional infirmity. I would look up at the window with the light—and grind my teeth.

I was unspeakably sorry for the poor sick Old Man.

And finally I have to tell you of the day when Milo appeared again at our front door. His legs were unsteady. His face was etiolated like an autumn leaf. Only under his eyes were lined the intense browns and greens of hepatic insufficiency, of one permanently bilious.

"Come in, Milo," I said, scarcely knowing what I would do with him.

And I was astonished to find the old eyes upon me!

"Candy!" said Milo at last.

"Candy will ruin you!" I cried. "Candy will make you sick. It will make you very sick again!"

Milo nodded his head.

"I know!" he said.

"Then what on earth do you want with candy, Milo? Do you want to be sick again?"

"Yes!" Milo said.

And his eyes gloated with a horrible expectation.

"I *love* the medicine," he added.

WHEN a husband begins to doubt that every man with whom his wife associates would give his life to kiss her—he no longer loves her.

THE sparkle in a woman's eyes signifies nothing. She may be happy; she may be crying; she may have had a cocktail.

THE worst of having a romance is that it leaves one so unromantic.

MARRIAGE—The refuge of the unpopular.

BETWEEN DICTATION

By Jane Sonya

ONE of my employers pleases me very much—he is so utterly an idiot. He is witty in a supercilious, *double-entendre* way which he loves to show off while he is giving me dictation—but he is really so stupid that I crinkle inwardly with laughter. He thinks he is irresistible; he imagines all the silly, unanchored women who 'phone him love him—when, as a matter of fact, they merely love the excellent luncheons he orders. How do I know that he orders excellent luncheons? Well, at any rate, I have been here nearly a year and we are still good friends—so you see there must be something clever about me.

His nose is bulbous, and he wheezes, and he walks like a dachshund; thank goodness I have never tried to dance with him!

A few hours of the day, say two and a half, he gives to business; the rest is a series of telephone conversations, soft—oh, so very low—I never knew a man who could talk so low. Sometimes he commands both doors of his office shut as he whispers, and then we know that it is *very* secret, and sometimes he takes his hat and goes across the street to use the pay-station booth—*crême de la crême* of his telephone flirtations.

But I will say this for him! Twice a day he calls up his wife and tells her to take care of herself.

THE CYNIC

By W. L. D. Bell

HE was a cynic.

He believed that every woman looked at a man with a view to marrying him.

He believed that no woman could shake hands with him without allowing her soft fingers to linger caressingly in his.

He believed that no woman could look at him without gazing at him out of the corners of her eyes, through lowered lashes.

He believed that no woman could kiss him without parting her lips and pressing herself close to him.

One day he met a woman who looked into his eyes fearlessly, laughed at him when he touched her, and slapped him across the face when he kissed her.

He married her.

* * * *

He is still a cynic.

He has merely changed his idea that all women employ similar methods.

MRS. MARGARET CALHOUN

A ONE-ACT PLAY

By Maxwell Bodenheim and Ben Hecht

CHARACTERS

A DEAD MAN
MRS. MARGARET CALHOUN
FIVE SENTENCES OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE DEAD MAN WHEN ALIVE TO MRS. MARGARET CALHOUN

The rear of the stage is completely covered by the representation of a huge envelope, eight feet high and fourteen feet long. The envelope has a large United States stamp in one of its corners, and is addressed in a large, sprawling hand. The address reads:

MRS. MARGARET CALHOUN
331 HIGHWATER COURT
NEW YORK CITY

A high, black, straight-legged stool stands to the right, in the foreground. The floor of the stage is covered with black cloth. Three seconds before the curtain-rise, a pistol-shot is heard. When the curtain rises, a man, dressed in evening clothes, is seen, stretched out on the floor, at the extreme right. A smoking pistol is clutched in his out-flung hand, and a trickle of blood runs across his white shirt to the floor.

After a ten-second pause, starting at the curtain-rise, a woman, dressed in street-clothes, and carrying a long, closed, pale green parasol, emerges from the envelope and walks as though in a trance to the high, black stool. She climbs up and sits upon it, opening her parasol and raising it above her head. She speaks.

MRS. MARGARET CALHOUN:

(*Sitting rigidly as she talks.*) I wonder if it's going to rain? I'd hate to have my new hat ruined. But I'd better be running along. Bobby will miss me.

Mrs. Calhoun, on concluding, remains as before—motionless.

A figure emerges jerkily, from the envelope. The figure is dressed in tight-fitting, purple and pink garments, and its green hair hangs loose about its shoulders. The figure personifies one of the sentences of the letter addressed to Mrs. Calhoun, and written by the man who lies dead upon the stage. The figure speaks in a loud voice, the moment it leaves the envelope.

FIRST SENTENCE:

My dearest! My dearest! (*The figure bows stiffly, and walks swiftly forward, until it is directly opposite Mrs. Calhoun. Then it swiftly turns.*) O—are you Mrs. Calhoun?

MRS. CALHOUN:

Yes, but I do hope my hat isn't being ruined!

FIRST SENTENCE:

Hm—you're a new one. When did he run across you? . . . To tell you the truth, Mrs. Calhoun, he has rather overworked me. This makes the hundredth and fifteenth time he has written me, as an obvious refuge from delicate perplexity. You know, I don't mean anything to him. He always leads off with me. He bites his pen, he frowns, he scratches his head, he yawns, he swears, and he writes me down. Last time I went to a little frightened country-girl, and she took me to bed and cried over me. . . . My dearest! Ho, ho, ho . . . ha.

MRS. CALHOUN:

(*Maintaining her rigid pose, opened parasol held up.*) You're from Billy. Wish he'd stop bothering me, now that I'm married.

FIRST SENTENCE:

Why, that never makes any difference to him. A telephone-girl, a prostitute, a married woman, a saint or a vampire—they're all alike to Billy. I heard him remark, the other night, that a respectably married woman was a virgin with improvements.

MRS. CALHOUN:

I suppose you're right. Before I married, I was Billy's single prey—his only quarry. Now I am one of the flock. That's what marriage does for a woman.

FIRST SENTENCE:

My dearest! My dearest . . . Don't mind it, Mrs. Calhoun. Thank God, I don't take myself seriously. I've become so used to heading letters that my sense of importance needs mending, and the only intangible tailor who could mend it is Death. . . . But I weary you, perhaps. Repetition gives us a woefully frayed earnestness.

MRS. CALHOUN:

My dearest—come here.
(*The First Sentence approaches her.*)

MRS. CALHOUN:

My dearest—that is what he used to call me.

FIRST SENTENCE:

Billy?

MRS. CALHOUN:

No! My husband!

FIRST SENTENCE:

(*Passionately.*) My dearest!
(*Mrs. Calhoun laughs. The figure artificially echoes her laugh and pirouettes about her. During this, another figure, as the first, emerges from the envelope, and jerkily walks to Mrs. Calhoun. The first figure calmly seats itself, a bit behind Mrs. Calhoun, and the second figure turns to her, and speaks in a quavering monotone.*)

SECOND SENTENCE:

I am unable to live without you . . . I am unable to live without you. (*The Second Sentence yawns, raises its eyes, and continues in a different voice.*) Wish he'd give me a rest!

FIRST SENTENCE:

Hush! That's Mrs. Calhoun.

SECOND SENTENCE:

She's a new one. . . . Guess he wrote me between drinks.

MRS. CALHOUN:

Billy is such a fool!

SECOND SENTENCE:

Come on! You'd be raging if he hadn't written me. Women like my delicate reminder of their former importance. Out of me they make little effigies of pain, and weep happily over them. (*Suddenly, passionately.*) I am unable to live without you! I—I—

MRS. CALHOUN:

(*Laughing.*) Billy is such a dear, really.

SECOND SENTENCE:

Indeed—his despair is so delicious, his agony so well-mannered, his boldness so daintily correct!

FIRST SENTENCE:

My dearest!

SECOND SENTENCE:

I am unable to live without you!
(*They both laugh.*)

MRS. CALHOUN:

Of course, it sounds very amusing to you, but I can't help feeling a faint glow of interest.

SECOND SENTENCE:

Glow of interest! Here's Billy pouring his anguish into me. "I am unable to live without you"—and she glows with interest!

FIRST SENTENCE:

How naive! How charming!

SECOND SENTENCE:

If you had wit, Mrs. Calhoun, I would think you were clumsily mocking us.

SECOND SENTENCE:

The last lady Billy couldn't live without deposited a tear upon me. Was it gratitude? I don't know. I presume she was grateful.

MRS. CALHOUN:

Don't think me heartless! Of course, I'm grateful, too.

FIRST SENTENCE:

My dearest!

SECOND SENTENCE:

I am unable to live without you!
(*The Second Sentence seats itself beside the first, a bit behind Mrs. Calhoun. A third figure emerges from the envelope. He is attired as the other two figures, and turns to Mrs. Calhoun, as the Second Sentence finishes speaking.*)

THIRD SENTENCE:

(*In a deep monotone.*) I have loved you to the last! I have loved you to the last!

FIRST SENTENCE:

Welcome! Welcome!

SECOND SENTENCE:

Ha, ha, ha . . . I knew you'd follow me. I was half expecting you. You always follow me. I never saw anything like it, Mrs. Calhoun. We're Siamese Twins, you might say.

THIRD SENTENCE:

Don't be rude! Give Billy a chance. I'm his trump card. (*Passionately.*) I have loved you to the last. . . . Doesn't it thrill you, Mrs. Calhoun, to be loved to the last?

MRS. CALHOUN:

It's utter nonsense. What is love?

THIRD SENTENCE:

What an amusing question for a married woman to ask!

MRS. CALHOUN.

Men hardly ever love women at the beginning. Besides, love that ends after the first step leaves a better remembrance. A nice shining little remembrance, like a broken toy, that one can play with at odd moments.

THIRD SENTENCE:

What pretty words you have found, to explain your infidelities!

SECOND SENTENCE:

I believe women are becoming more civilized every day.

FIRST SENTENCE:

Remember the prostitute? Billy never troubled to write me to her. He loved her more obviously.

SECOND SENTENCE:

Poor woman, she had an immaculate heart.

THIRD SENTENCE:

Yes, she had a virginal contempt of her body!

MRS. CALHOUN:

I've often wondered how they can kiss so many times.

THIRD SENTENCE:

You might ask yourself.

FIRST SENTENCE:

My dearest!

SECOND SENTENCE:

I am unable to live without you!

THIRD SENTENCE:

I have loved you to the last!

(*The three laugh softly. As they laugh, a fourth figure emerges from the envelope, walks stiffly toward Mrs. Calhoun, and slowly turns.*)

FOURTH SENTENCE:

Forgive me and forget me! Forgive me and forget me! And so I stroll with closed eyes.

FIRST SENTENCE:

Billy's in good form tonight.

MRS. CALHOUN:

He writes as though it were my fault. I'm sure I don't know what to forgive him for.

SECOND SENTENCE:

It's the remnant of Billy's conscience. As he grows older, he instinctively asks the forgiveness of every woman he writes to.

THIRD SENTENCE:

Mrs. Calhoun gets you, don't you, Mrs. Calhoun?

MRS. CALHOUN:

I can't say—that line always baffles me. If the poor boy did anything that was wrong, I'd forgive him at once.

FIRST SENTENCE:

And love him, perhaps?

FOURTH SENTENCE:

O, I'm just a fragrant whim, I suppose. I used to think I was faintly important.

CHORUS OF SENTENCES:

And so we all did!

(*Mrs. Calhoun laughs softly as the Sentences repeat their chorus.*)

FIRST SENTENCE:

My dearest!

SECOND SENTENCE:

I am unable to live without you!

THIRD SENTENCE:

I have loved you to the last!

FOURTH SENTENCE:

I am not worthy of you!

(*As the Fourth Sentence concludes, a fifth figure comes out of the envelope, trots to Mrs. Calhoun, and speaks in a high-pitched voice.*)

FIFTH SENTENCE:

I am not worthy of you! I am not worthy of you!

CHORUS OF THE OTHER SENTENCES:

Welcome, I-Am-Not-Worthy, old boy.

FIRST SENTENCE:

Family reunion delicately completed!

SECOND SENTENCE:

You hide your age well, old harlequin!

THIRD SENTENCE:

O tottering one, how well you preserve your grimacing ghost of despair!

FIFTH SENTENCE:

(*Addressing Mrs. Calhoun.*) I am a quaint bonnet you like to wear. Even after you have cast me aside, you always return, to tear off a buckle or limp string, with which you decorate more pretentious hats.

MRS. CALHOUN:

I'm sure I don't know what you mean by that. How on earth could I make a hat of you?

FIFTH SENTENCE:

A hat is shown to so many people, you know.

MRS. CALHOUN:

(*Indignantly.*) I'd never dream of showing you to anyone!

SECOND SENTENCE:

Don't bother her, I-Am-Not-Worthy! You shouldn't suggest to her something she has already timidly thought of. You must not spoil the proud showing of you, over some hidden tea-table, and the sigh at the end—"Poor boy, he was crazy about me!"

(*Mrs. Calhoun sits pouting, and the figures softly laugh. In the midst of their laughter, the Fifth Sentence accidently turns to the stage-right and spies the dead man, whose letter has*

been the topic of conversation, lying upon his back.)

FIFTH SENTENCE:

(Pointing to the dead man.) BILLY!

The other Sentences turn and stare at the dead man. Mrs. Calhoun turns also. After a long pause, they shriek, in unison, and retreat toward the envelope. They vanish into the envelope, Mrs. Calhoun being the last to disappear. There is another short pause and the curtain falls.

WHAT I WOULD HAVE

By Morris Gilbert

I'D have a moon of phosphorus
Hung in a jinkgo tree,
And molten opals to play in drops
From a fountain of ebony,
And a nightingale with a throat of gold
To sing its melody;
And round the garden a marble wall,
Smooth and yellow-veined and not high at all,
To guard all jealously.

And over the wall would stand peering in
(With faces pallid with wonder,
And eyes tremendous at what they'd see,
And "Oh's!" rolling up like thunder)
All the people in all the worlds
Round my garden and under—
All the people but you and me
And a turbaned nigger-brat on one knee
To pass the cups and not blunder.

You'd sit quite still on a lacquer stool
With your hair in a high bright pile,
With a fan, and a gown of stiff gold silk,
And a winsome and delicate smile—
And I'd stand before you in turquoise and jade
Serene and without guile:
And there we would be and never move,
And never speak at all but only love,
And laugh with our eyes all the while.

UNDER twenty a girl blushes; between twenty and thirty she colors; and over thirty she causes others to blush.

THE MOST POPULAR MAN

By Helen Carroll

THAT tall man with the smooth, blond hair—

The one with the sensual mouth and wicked eyes—

Whose faultless tie and carnation gleam fresh and white above his smart waistcoat--

The man women smile at so oddly and tempt with slanting glance and lingering touch—

I loathe him.

He led me behind some thick palms.

As the orchestra played the "Love Tales," he held me close to him.

He said that my lips were like Burgundy that tempted him to sip until he became drunk with Love . . .

I loathe him.

He pressed my lips so gently that when we emerged from the palms no one suspected that he had kissed me.

THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

By Marion L. Bloom

SHE listened indifferently to his mad words of love. His comparison of her to a delicate flower, a fragile piece of china, an adorable creature to be worshipped from afar, brought no reward save an aloof nod.

Nervously he tried again. "You are as precious to me as my own mother. Yes, as chaste and angelic. And I love you."

She smiled coldly.

"Does it mean nothing to you that I give to you all my respect for womanhood? That I regard you sacredly?"

Again that cold smile.

"You are a little baby to me, a dear little baby to be protected and loved zealously."

One slim shoulder shrugged itself delicately as her lips quivered in a grin.

"Ah, you temptress! You vampire! You Babylonian woman! You hussy! You—"

She leaned forward eagerly. One small hand crept into his sympathetically, and she smiled ecstatically.

THE EPISODE IN THE CLOAKROOM

By Harold Jefferson

SCREAMS were coming from the smaller, secluded cloak-room—the screams of a woman in terror and agony. Mingled with the screaming came a dull, resounding, pounding noise. It was ghastly. Four footmen in pink livery besieged the closed door of the cloak-room. A mass of people in fancy dress swarmed down the marble steps from the ballroom of the hotel, and eddied rather timidly toward the door. And still the screams continued.

It was I, Richard Vaught Mellow, one-time star reporter of the Chicago *Sentinel,* who was causing the screaming. The ear-splitting shrieks were as a subtle perfume to my senses. What matter that this morning (the proverbial morning after) I stand disgraced and an outcast? What matter that I have lost my job? Oh, rot! Nothing matters. Those screams ring in my ears yet.

Joy has upset my reason. I am a versatile Pollyanna for joy. It upsets me. But no. I am a man and a reporter. I must remember that I owe it to the reading public to set forth the reasons why their favorite specialty and feature man on the *Sentinel* will no longer regale their intelligences with his work.

I have intimated that I was a star on the *Sentinel.* Without wishing to seem egotistical, allow me to repeat the fact. I repeat it in order that you may understand how it was that I was sent to write a three-column front-page feature about the greatest event of the decade —a social event at that. I was put in command of a battery of photogs and an army of society reporters and copy boys. The event was important for many reasons.

Mrs. Wescott Van der Veeve was giving this stupendous masquerade for the benefit of the Red Cross and was hiring with her own money the entire second and third floors of Chicago's most luxurious hotel. A mere matter of millions to the Van der Veeve. A matter of intense newspaper rivalry, since the Van der Veeves were not "spending" people.

Moreover, it was bruited about that there were surprises in store for us. Again, the only tickets recognized at the door were cheques for $1,000. Finally, Mrs. Van der Veeve was a newcomer to the city, and while accepted by the Sacred Circles as One of Them, she had never entertained on a particularly large scale before.

Indeed yes—it was an important affair. I was not surprised that they assigned me to cover it. I am never surprised.

Of course, I always dress the part. I may say that I always look the part. I am a gentleman, although a self-made one. My humble origin in a miserable little village did not stunt my development as a man of the world and a star writer. I've always been told that I would look splendid in a soldier's uniform.

At all events—behold me now in a mauve limousine (hired) with an initialed cigarette between my slightly-rouged lips, and reviewing as I speed toward the scene of my imagined triumph—reviewing my life in the village of Hotchkiss, Indiana.

Why should I think upon Hotchkiss at such a moment? The Lord knows.

But after all I am given to doing and thinking the unusual. I am not a snob. I have never hidden my origin. I have always been free to confess that my father was the village postmaster and undertaker, and that mother ran a boarding-house.

I think it is a sign of true nobility to admit one's deficiencies. To be sure, my parents were not exactly a failing of mine. They were wished on me. Had I been consulted before birth, I probably would have protested with some such speech as this: "The Mellows? They want a little boy? No, thank you, Mrs. Angel. I prefer not to be born in a small town. Besides, I've partially promised the Knockerfellows that I would be their heir. And while considering their claims, I am also considering the petition of the celebrated artist Callooso that I be born to his wife Amede, and be a genius when I grow up."

But nobody consulted me. I was born in Hotchkiss, willy nilly.

Having been born in Hotchkiss I was forced to grow up there. A village like Hotchkiss offers little to an artistic soul. It has no scenery. It has no intellectual life. It is deadly virtuous, and therefore offers none of those delicate *affaires* that abound in a large city. Indeed, there was but one pretty girl in the town, and she, strictly speaking, was not of the town.

Her name was Florentina Spades, and her father was for several years telegraph operator at the station.

Florentina—um! I kiss my fingers to you even now, *ma petite!* You were so plumply slender (I use the phrase advisedly), so blonde and so innocent. Yes, you were innocent—but you had a large, soft mouth and you opened it wide for our first kiss.

Show me the woman—any woman—all women—who has a large, soft mouth and I'll bet you my studs that she is a hummer at kissing on the sly. I never knew it to fail. It may spoil a beautiful face, but personally I'd pick out such a mouth and honor it with my attentions any day in preference to a rosebud-lipped beauty. There is something uncanny about that rule. The woman may be anything from a *soeur de Joie* to a missionary—but beware of that large, sensitive, soft mouth with its curly lips!

When a girl you know to be perfectly nice opens her mouth for her (guaranteed) first kiss . . .

We loved.

And I lost.

She told her parents—which, after all, proved her innocence. And I was offered the business end of a shotgun as an inducement to leave for the city. Florentina wanted to go with me, but somehow I had had enough of her. Of course, I did not know myself then for the man I am now—otherwise I should have insisted upon marrying Florentina Spades.

That was my lyric. Of course, I had contributed the most important part of it—the words. Florentina had but furnished the music of her beauty.

So I sat in the limousine and pondered upon the town of my birth and Florentina. And shortly the blazing boulevard flashed upon me, and shortly the canopy of the hotel, and shortly Gaston, the doorman, who knows me by name.

I hastened up to the dressing-room. I naturally made for the one at the left which is reserved for the men guests, but an unheard of thing happened. Some stupid fellow who had never seen me stopped me and asked for my guest card—otherwise, my cheque for $1,000. I stared at him. One can express a great deal in a single stare—at least, I can. I said, "My good man, I am Mellows of the *Sentinel.*"

"Reporters leave their things below, sir," replied that blockhead.

"You may send for Smythe," I said with my never failing dignity. Smythe is the manager of the hotel and my firm friend.

"I don't know Mr. Smythe, sir," insisted the fellow, "but in any case I must ask you to leave your things downstairs in the public checking room.

Please stand aside, sir. There is a line behind you."

At this moment a giggle struck my ears—a high-pitched, sandy sort of a giggle. It rasped. I looked, and beheld one of those sharp-ankled, hollow-chested, bow-legged, raw-boned, rouged, painted and powdered daughters of the idle rich. This one was particularly unattractive, and somehow the fact that she had a large mouth did not make me feel any more kindly toward her. She was darn homely. She had braces on her teeth. And her mouth was too large. There is a limit even to one's preferences.

The little brat giggled again. I could see that she was simply wallowing in her first attack of grown-up-ish-ness. She belonged in the nursery and she knew it. She hadn't even reached the irregular verbs, from her appearance.

At her third tee-hee I felt myself getting red. A man can stand just so much, even if he is a reporter.

"Send for Mr. Smythe, the manager of this hotel," I roared.

"I have nothing to do with this hotel, sir," gloated the lacky. "I belong to Mrs. Van der Veeve's household, sir, and my instructions are very strict, sir. The checking room downstairs at your left, sir. Thank you, sir."

"I'll protest to Mrs. Van der Veeve," I bluffed.

Then I nearly was surprised. The brat near me stood up and said in a disgustingly adolescent drawl:

"Hadn't you better show this person the way, Hawkins? He may be slightly bewildered in this hotel."

I was about to make some brilliant retort, when Hawkins kowtowed.

"Certainly, Miss Italia," he said. "An excellent idea. This way, sir."

I had to follow him. The brat was giggling in her characteristically bad manner. I never saw a young female with less personality. I followed—because it had dawned upon me that this little snip was Italia Van der Veeve, whose picture was in the papers continually as being "prominent in the younger set," or else either just going to some select school in the east or just home from that same school.

Leaving my things, I raced upstairs. Mrs. Van der Veeve was surrounded and I knew I had no chance at her for an hour at least. So I concentrated on the guests. I lined up my photographers and issued paper and pencils to my aides, then ushered the guests up to be photographed and their costumes described.

I'll admit that the ball was impressive. And the costumes were remarkable. Marita Dexter, I remember, created the greatest sensation with her Egyptian Goddess costume, which consisted of a layer of gold leaf over her entire body and black silk net wound around her hips. A red jacket covered the upper part of her person—to a certain degree—and a fine, diaphanous blue gauze skirt fell from beneath the black net. She was ravingly sketchy. I did a pencil note of her myself.

Amelia Alber, who is blonde, came dressed as a champagne bottle, her golden hair forming the cork, and her silk stockings must have cost a fortune, if one pays for length. Myrtle Manly was a cherub with a cloud. Dotty Messenger, who always was a dramatic young person, came in as a Greek courtesan, her bare feet on the shoulders of two burly slaves. She was standing upright, of course, and she must have had to do some nice balancing. But I imagine it isn't so different from riding two circus ponies at once, and they say that her maternal great-aunt was a circus rider. And Annabel France Francis touched a romantic chord in my heart when she had herself carried in by two policemen as though they had fished her up from the lake. She wore a charming negligée, and it was sopping wet, and her hair was soaked! But she danced them both dry in an hour.

Being something of an artist, I enjoyed that hour immensely. But finally I began to feel faint. I never eat before coming to such a place. One is generally sure of a good feed there. So I made my way to the buffet, think-

ing to refresh myself before tackling Mrs. Van der Veeve.

Just as I annexed my share of the flesh pots, however, I heard that sandy-voiced little brat near me.

"Hawkins," she was saying, loud enough for everyone to hear, "I'm sure mammah would not approve of these newspaper people mingling with our guests. Besides, deah Mammah has provided so lavishly for them downstairs. She has some excellent lemonade and claret down there, and I am sure they will find it more refreshing as a basis for their hard work than all this heavy champagne."

And Hawkins, with his "Quite so, Miss Italia," signalled me for the second time, and for the second time I had to obey.

I cast an outraged glance at Mademoiselle Van der Veeve as I passed, and I think that I muttered something about revenge.

I went downstairs and ate. I had to. I would have been glad to have refused haughtily, but I was starved. I had to swallow my pride with a plebeian helping of roast pork. I thought of the delicate cakes and sandwiches and ices and salads upstairs, and sighed and ordered the waiter to bring me some baked potato. As long as I was being treated like a lackey, I thought, I might as well eat like one.

My repast over, I again climbed the stairs to the third floor. I had started to take the elevator, but Italia appeared in her silly fairy costume, and hinted that deah mammah had reserved those cars for her guests. Of course, there was no earthly reason why I should not use them—but Italia. She was a little snip and I wanted to spank her.

Now it was time that I approach Mrs. Van der Veeve herself. By this time I was sick of the whole thing. But my work would not be finished until I had secured a posed picture of that lady in her much press-agented costume of Eve. I had hoped for a thrill from the costume, but from across the room I could see that it was merely another one of those pathetic attempts to be vivid through the newspapers. The costume consisted of a huge leaf sewed bag-wise to another huge leaf, the two forming ample and perhaps charitable protection to her matronly form. Her feet, however, were bare. And she was agonizingly conscious of the fact, too. She kept trying to sneak them under the edge of the portieres. She wore all her jewels.

I was not surprised.

I approached her, as she sat trying to hide her bare, shapeless feet, and sipping something pinkish from a glass taken from the footman's tray.

"Mrs. Van der Veeve," I began with my usual bow, "I represent the *Sentinel*. My name is Richard Vaught Mellow. I—"

The woman before me had risen. She forgot her feet. She forgot her beefy legs. She leaned forward and clutched my lapel. I drew back. I was always one to resent familiarity.

"Dickey!"

It was Florentina Spades.

She didn't swoon. It would have mitigated the resentment I felt towards her if she had swooned gracefully. Then Hawkins would have been compelled to recognize me as a friend of his mistress. Instead she made hiccupy noises and grew red in the face. I could not pull my lapel from her grasp. I had heard of a man in a similar predicament flinging his arms over his head and slipping from his coat, but I remembered that I had a position to maintain. Mrs. Van der Veeve hadn't.

So I merely murmured "Florentina" in a conciliatory tone and tried to laugh it off. But Florentina fixed her staring eyes upon me and moistened her always entrancing red mouth and said,

"This is a surprise. Come with me into this smoking-room where we can talk. So glad to see you."

Then to the lackey, "Hawkins, we do not wish to be disturbed."

There was no help for it. I followed her into the little smoking-room and she kissed me. A close-up of Flor-

entina reveals nothing but her mouth, so that was not so bad. But when she hauled off and regarded me with loving eyes, I wanted to yell for Hawkins.

"After these many years!" she was gurgling. "So many long years! They made me marry the next year, and dear Veeve has made such a success of life. I see that you haven't quite achieved, have you, Dickey?"

Tactless woman. I hardened my heart again.

"My month in Arcady, I call it, Dicky, dear," she continued, still patting my shoulders. "You, the shepherd, and I the shepherdess. Tending our sheep in Arcady."

"Tending our old cow, you mean," I said with all the brutality I could muster. I can be very cruel.

"We must be friends now, Dicky. Simply friends. But close ones. Wescott is a dear soul and I am quite fond of him. He certainly has given me a great deal."

"My edition," I started to explain. "I have to get back to my office and make my edition. As a matter of fact, they are holding the paper until I get there." (I could not resist this little touch, after her remark about my non-importance.)

"Not until you have seen—"

She paused archly.

"Seen who—what—where?"

"Our child, Dicky, dearest."

I was utterly crushed.

"What—what is it?" I said feebly.

"Our daughter. Our beautiful, ethereal, talented little daughter. Dear Wescott thinks she is his child. He married me a week after you left. But I have watched her grow and grow and blossom into you, dear heart. You! Your brain, your wit, your features. . . . Oh, let us find her! I want her to see you! I want you to see her. I want to see the glow of love light your eyes as you gaze upon Italia, your daughter."

I followed her without a word. My chin was firm. I always square my chin when I am implacable. I said nothing. She led me out of the little room and we started on a tour of the ballroom to find Italia. I kept my eyes bent upon the ground. Had she seen the hidden venom in them she would have surely swooned. My eyes are expressive.

We found Italia near the stairway that led to the cloak rooms, harassing some waiters. She was telling them how deah mammah wanted things done. She eyed my approach with a quiet satisfaction and licked her lips in anticipation of further victories. Then she spied her mother and grew sullen. I turned to Mrs. Van der Veeve.

"What a glorious girl!" I breathed with a good deal of intensity. Florentina looked enraptured. She misunderstood my feelings. "She is the image of you," I continued.

"Oh, Dickey, dear—she is the image of you!" Florentina protested.

"To think that that is my daughter!" I murmured as we drew nearer. I had already formulated a plan. It was a good one. I am something of a strategist. "I'll tell you what—let me have a few moments alone with the little cherub. My father's heart will rejoice, even to speak to her incog—as I might express it."

The idea pleased Florentina. It pleased her so much that she never noticed the brat's disdainful snuffle as she introduced me.

"Miss Van der Veeve," I said with perfect control of my voice (although I'll admit to a certain elation that made calm difficult), "I would like to take your picture for the *Sentinel*. If you will step into this little cloak room your mother is going to be good enough to send my chief artist here in a moment."

She was flattered. She simpered and shrugged and entered the cloak room with a petulant "Well, hurry up, mammah deah." I entered after her. I looked coldly upon this little fiend for whose existence I was responsible. Then I smiled with utter satisfaction.

"Come to papa, Italia," I said, and before she could reply I laid my daughter across my knee and spanked her.

Hence the shrieks:

THE MISOGYNIST

By ——— ———

I HATE women! Sly, urbane, unctuous, tittly-tattly, rouged, big-busted, kalsomined, jaundiced, doll-faced, vampire, Pollyanna, chorus-girl, flat-faced, passionate, decent, fish-eyed, temperamental, beautiful women!

I shall always hate women! They make me sick. Their sly and subtle innuendoes and manœuverings are obvious to me. Their complete catalogue of campaigning methods and tricks for landing the coveted male are, to me, an open and laugh-provoking book.

How I hate women! I shall always hate them. Last week one of them ran away with Madeline Foote's husband, when my husband is a darned sight better looking. I never have any luck!

THE JESTER

By Harold Crawford Stearns

MY friends, kind friends, withhold your blame
Until my dust blows down the wind,
Nor praise me, lest I blush with shame,
Until I play the last, grim game,
And leave my dreams behind.

My friends, dear friends, reserve your tears,—
No thing of worth can grow from chaff,—
But when the least among you hears
The sob and sigh of dying years,
Remember me, and laugh.

THE devotion of a married woman is deep and terrible. Fortunately, it is the one misfortune her husband escapes.

AMBITION is the consolation of those who have failed.

UNDERSTANDING

By Van Vechten Hostetter

I

AFTER school a little girl had invited the boy Horace Bellamy to stop and play with her on her sand pile. He had declined, though regretfully, because of his mother's strict rule never to loiter on the way home and his own disposition to obedience.

He had wavered when the little girl pouted and coaxed, arguing that it wouldn't hurt to stop "just a minute.". Yellow curls do not wait long before beginning their work in the world. Sophistry and keen desire having overcome scruple, there had remained the fear of punishment and the boy Horace's guileless mind had been helpless to dispose of that.

The little girl had suggested he could say he was asked to remain a while and help the teacher clean the blackboards. Then he had succumbed.

On the sand pile they had forgotten time until the sun disappeared and the little girl's mother called her into the house.

Now the boy Horace was on his way home, uneasy with the realization of the blackboard story's hopelessness and wondering if his little friend was grieving much over his predicament. He hoped not, though it would go hard with him. There was just a chance that there was company for dinner, in which event Mrs. Bellamy's wrath would cool before she could have opportunity to punish Horace—but this was Friday and there was seldom company on Friday.

It seemed all up with him. The expedient of prayer occurred to him. He quickly rejected the idea; prayer was all right for blessing people, but for meeting the real issues of life its efficacy was never to be counted upon; he had prayed from one Christmas to another for a goat and a drum and had received nothing nearer to what he asked than a bicycle and a box of paints. He had traded the bicycle for a goat and then the animal had been stolen. No, there was no use in praying.

It was almost dinner time now and Horace hurried as fast as he could. Hurry could not save him now, but, without reasoning, he wanted to reduce his tardiness as much as possible. A man, swinging a traveling-bag, strode past him. He drove himself to keep at the man's heels. Presently two children, a boy and a girl, came running to meet the man, calling, "Hello, Papa!" He stopped and dropped his bag and took them up in his arms. The boy shouted and the little girl squealed with delight. Some traveling man just getting home, Horace supposed.

The sight revived the flickering hope in his heart as he tramped on past the group; perhaps his own father had come home and if so he had nothing to fear, for his own father was a kind and gentle man. He was big and ferocious-looking — so ferocious-looking, really, that babies always cried when he looked at them, but in truth nobody could be farther from ferocious than he. His father had never touched Horace with any but a friendly hand and when his father was at home his mother never punished him.

Altogether, if he must sin—which he never intended to do—it was much better to sin when Mr. Bellamy was

around. Not that Mrs. Bellamy was a cruel mother; true, she was severe, but she was still about as satisfactory as any that had come under Horace's notice.

Now as he dwelt upon the pleasant possibility of his father's return it occurred to Horace somewhat suddenly that Mr. Bellamy had been away from home very much longer than usual. But for the seriousness of his situation he probably would never have observed the fact, for he was accustomed to his father's being away; separation from his father for a month or so was as much a matter of course to him as separation from theirs for a day was to most boys. He had never known any other arrangement.

Now, however, it seemed that Mr. Bellamy had been away twice the usual length of time or even longer. Well, so much greater the likelihood of his being at home now. Horace hurried on, the hope in his heart growing almost to confidence.

By the time he reached home misgivings assailed him, but as he slipped all breathless into the hall he sighed like a man delivered from disaster. There was a hat; it looked like his father's and probably was, but at any rate it was somebody's. Roger went into the sitting-room, prepared to greet his father, but his father was not there. Instead was Doctor Core, leaning back in his chair and smoking a cigar complacently, as was the doctor's habit when he visited the Bellamys.

Horace did not like Doctor Core very well. Just why he did not know—it had never occurred to him to analyze his feeling—but probably it was because the doctor was like his father and at the same time unlike him. They were both big men with yellow hair that was short and curly—there the likeness ended. Mr. Bellamy was blue-eyed and talked a great deal and was always full of jokes: Doctor Core's eyes were smaller and gray and the doctor talked little and had no jokes; he seemed to do nothing but lean back in his chair and look up at the ceiling and smile and smoke.

The fact that his father and mother regarded Doctor Core as a sort of fourth member of the family did not make Horace care any the more for him; he would not have cared if the doctor had stopped coming to the house. Tonight, though, it was agreeable to have Doctor Core here and Horace welcomed him with unusual cheerfulness. He almost positively liked him tonight and through dinner the liking became quite positive. He would have liked to sit up through the evening with his mother and Doctor Core, but he said nothing of this and went obediently and willingly to bed. He had much to be thankful for and it would not have been sensible to want more to the point of insistence.

Horace went to sleep wondering at his father's extended absence and thinking to ask his mother about it in the morning. In the morning, however, Mrs. Bellamy remained in bed with a headache; Horace had breakfast alone and went off to school without seeing her, and had no opportunity until evening to ask his question.

"Mother," he said, "when will Papa come home?"

"I don't know, Horace," she said; "before long, I suppose, but I don't know."

"He never stayed away so long before?" Horace said questioningly.

"You see, he has to," his mother answered. "It is business that keeps him."

"Well, I wish there wasn't any business," Horace said, a little petulantly, "so he would be home all the time."

"Hush," his mother reproved. "It is business that makes a home for you and me. It has to be that way. You mustn't think so much about your father when he's away."

"Very well, Mother," Horace said resignedly; it was the thing to say, regardless of his inability to control his thoughts.

Thoughts could be concealed, however, and Horace asked no more ques-

tions. There were questions in his mind, but he was not unduly exercised by them, being conscious of youth's limitations of understanding and willing to wait until the proper time when everything would appear clear that now perplexed him.

II

THE days lengthened and grew hot and presently school closed for the summer. Then Horace's mother told him that his father had sent for him. There was no telling how much longer Mr. Bellamy would have to be away, so Horace was to go to him. Then they could come home together. His mother and Doctor Core took him down to the station and put him on the train early in the morning and he rode until it was almost dark.

The time passed quickly. It was great fun to look out the window and see the fields and farmhouses and towns rushing past and wave his hands in answer to the people along the way that waved to him and laughed. Other travelers, too, came and sat and talked with him, asking him all kinds of questions, which he answered to the best of his ability. Some of them were pretty young women and some were men that made funny faces and said funny things.

At the end of the ride the porter helped him off with his bag and there was his father waiting for him. His father smiled joyfully and squeezed his hands and Horace squeezed back as well as he could.

It seemed to Horace he had never before been so happy nor seen his father so happy. He was so glad to be with his father that he could have kissed him, but, of course, he could not do that. To kiss his mother was quite proper and even to be recommended, but to kiss his father was unmanly. So his father said and his father was unquestionably right. Still, he would have liked to kiss him.

But to have his father with his big, terrible-looking face look down at him with eyes that were full of love and full of pride was enough. There was something wonderful, thrilling in knowing this big man, whose looks were enough to scare anybody, and not being afraid of him.

Horace had a bunch of very satisfactory school reports to show and many pictures of his friends and his mother and Doctor Core and himself. He had greetings to deliver from his mother and the doctor. His father was anxious to know all about his mother and the doctor. He was glad to hear that they were well and that Doctor Core was often at the house.

"I don't like to have him there very well, though," Horace said and was sorry at once, for it made his father sad.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I hope you'll come to like him better. I don't know what your mother would do without him when I must be away so much."

"I don't want you away," Horace said.

"We can't always have things as we want them, my boy," his father answered sadly. "You must try always to stand the unpleasant things, no matter how unpleasant they are. I don't want to be away, either, but I have to be, so you and I must be brave about it."

Horace promised to do his best.

The days that followed were crowded with joy. They lived in a beautiful hotel that reminded Horace of the palaces he had read about in fairy tales. It was full of handsome men and beautiful women and flowers and lights and men and boys with blue suits and brass buttons. The uniformed men and boys bowed and scraped and waited upon him as if he had been a prince and it was easy to imagine that the young women were princesses of some sort; many of them looked quite good enough and sweet enough to be princesses; all that saw him smiled at him and some stopped and chatted; he would have rejoiced in the opportunity to rescue any one of them from the wickedest giant that ever held a beautiful princess prisoner.

To his father he deplored the fact that there were no wicked giants nowadays. He saw so many nice young ladies and they were all so good that it would be the dandiest thing in the world to rescue them. He was surprised and delighted when his father told him he would find just as heroic and satisfying things to do as he grew older.

"You may even find giants of some sort to fight," his father said, "and princesses to save."

The hateful business that kept Mr. Bellamy away from home so much required only a few hours each day and the rest of the time he and Horace spent at ball games and theaters and driving through the city and the parks and the country. The country was the best, full of the smell of growing things and animals.

Sometimes, too, they went up and down the river on steamboats. It was great pleasure to sit on the deck and listen to the music and watch the people dance and it was great to go and talk to the pilot and help him guide the boat, or watch the powerful engines and have the engineer explain their working.

III

It was late in the summer that Horace discovered a change in his father's manner that caused him some anxiety.

Mr. Bellamy became less talkative and sometimes did not seem to care for what Horace said. They came and went as much as ever, but only once in a while did Mr. Bellamy take the wholesome and lively pleasure in their adventures that he had taken at first. Then he would lapse into silence that was so sombre it filled Horace's heart with vague misgivings.

Ordinarily he would have frankly questioned his father, but there was something forbidding in Mr. Bellamy's manner. They seemed to be growing away from each other. Once or twice when Horace was intently watching some interesting thing he became unpleasantly conscious that his father was looking at him with a strange, fixed look that he had never known before. It made him shiver. He was afraid. And it was not the fear of some wholesome thing, like punishment for disobedience, but of some mysterious and sinister thing.

They had been accustomed to go to bed together. Now Horace went to bed alone and his father sat up, leaning forward with his elbows on the arms of his chair, holding one hand in the other and staring at the wall, his mouth twisted peculiarly and set.

How long he sat that way, motionless, Horace did not know, but sometimes it seemed hours before Horace could sleep and he did not know when his father came to bed. One morning when he awoke his father was still in his chair. He was afraid to have his father know what he had seen, so he feigned sleep until Mr. Bellamy came and shook him and told him to dress for breakfast.

It was like the promise of deliverance when his father told Horace he should go home the next Saturday and he was doubly glad to know that Mr. Bellamy was not to go with him.

Yet, still afraid, he refrained from any show of gladness.

He simply said, "Yes, sir," when his father told him school would be resumed soon.

He was afraid he would be asked if he wanted to go, but he was not asked.

Friday afternoon his father helped him pack his trunk and his bag. That night his father was still sitting in his chair when Horace went to sleep after lying awake for what seemed hours.

It was late when he awoke. The sun was streaming in the window. His father was dressed and standing beside the bed. Horace was wondering if he must hurry to catch the train, but Mr. Bellamy said,

"I have decided to have you go tomorrow."

Horace concealed his disappoint-

ment; it would not be so very long to wait.

But when Sunday came the homegoing was put off for another day and Monday it was the same. One afternoon they went to a ball game and one to a matinée. Mr. Bellamy hardly spoke and Horace was silent with growing fear of some impending horror.

Tuesday after breakfast the porter came and took Horace's trunk away and he and his father began putting his things in his traveling-bag.

There was a knock on the door and Mr. Bellamy opened it and stood back.

Horace's mother came into the room. Her eyes were red, as if she had been crying.

Horace would have run and thrown his arms around her, but something held him where he was. She glanced at him and then faced his father, who stood leaning against a chair and looking somehow weak and helpless. He hung his head. Mrs. Bellamy held hers high and her face was stern, more stern than it had ever been when she punished Horace.

Her voice was low and tense.

"I have come for my boy," she said.

Mr. Bellamy looked up at her without lifting his head.

"There is our boy," he said, with a gesture toward Horace. "Perhaps for the sake of what you call honor you will admit he is ours. You need not have been afraid; I wouldn't steal from you—even what is mine."

Horace knew only that they were quarreling.

"Honor!" said his mother scornfully. "Honor! It would be better for him to have a mother without honor than the father he—"

Horace's father straightened and rushed at his mother, striking her with his open hand on the side of the head before she could cry out or raise an arm to protect herself. She fell heavily, her head striking hard against the floor.

Horace's father dropped on his knees beside her.

He threw her roughly on her back and his hand closed on her throat. Now Horace knew why so many people were afraid of that ferocious face. It was horrible now.

Horace stood transfixed with fear.

"God help you! God help you!" His father's voice came low and trembling through his set teeth as his fingers tightened and Mrs. Bellamy's face grew dark. Then he looked up at Horace and the strength seemed to go out of him. His hands fell to his sides. His head dropped forward until his chin rested on his breast. Presently he got up and made his way unsteadily to a chair, where he sat staring stupidly at his wife. After a while she stirred and opened her eyes and without trying to rise looked at him fearfully.

"Do not be afraid," he said calmly. "Go—and take him. Here is the check for his trunk. It is at the station."

He laid it on the table and moved heavily toward the door; he stopped thoughtfully a moment and went back.

"And here is money," he said, placing some bills beside the check. Then he went out.

IV

Horace Bellamy grew up to hate his father. It was not vindictive hatred, but cold and hard as steel and bitter. In boyhood he knew only that his last days with his father had been miserable and that his father had abused his mother. That was enough to know.

In youth he learned that life was not simple and that he knew only the end of his father's and mother's life together and nothing of the thousand circumstances that had gone before. But he did not need to know those circumstances. He knew what duty and honor required of a man. That was enough. If his mother had erred it would have been for lack of sympathy and love; it would have been because her soul was sick and starved by neglect of the man that had promised to keep it well and feed it—but she had not erred.

There could have been no suspicion

involving his mother and Doctor Core, for his father and the doctor had been friends from childhood; and had there been suspicion, the man, strong and able to defend, and not the woman, weak and helpless, should have been called to bear punishment and pay penalties.

The youth Horace cared no more for Doctor Core than had the boy Horace, but, having some sense of fairness, he could not fail to appreciate the doctor's steadfast devotion to Mrs. Bellamy and to himself. He seldom called, but he was always within call and the knowledge of that was comfort and courage to Mrs. Bellamy.

"I am not alone," his mother told Horace, "for I have him and you and when he is gone you will be a man—if he has to go."

Mrs. Bellamy was the one to go. Horace learned that her small personal estate was virtually exhausted, so he abandoned his plans for the university and went to work rather than accept help from Doctor Core.

In a few months he heard from his father. It was the first letter he had ever had from him. It was written from a little town in Iowa.

"I am an old man now," he said, "a good deal older than I ought to be, I guess. I suppose you are bitter against me, but I thought I would write and tell you I am your father and love you and if I can ever help you I shall be glad to."

It took Horace by surprise; his heart softened, then grew hard again; of course his father was repentant, now that he was old and paying the penalty for his sins; so were convicted felons penitent. The devil was sick. His father's words were probably as sincere as a man's under sentence. Horace did not answer the letter; yet he could not be rid of a disquieting thought that possibly after all his father had written from a contrite heart.

Then in a few days came another letter: Mr. Bellamy was sick and he had no friends to turn to; he thought perhaps Horace would let him have five dollars if he could spare it. So it was as Horace had thought, after all. He threw the letter away and the first one with it.

Some time later a message came that his father was dead; unless the coroner heard from him the body would be buried in potter's field.

The coroner did not hear.

V

Enid Cornelius had been Horace Bellamy's stenographer less than a month when he married her. Since his mother's death Horace had been miserably alone. He had almost given up hope of ever being otherwise when he found this girl, for the years had given him nothing but disappointment.

Here had been a woman who was beautiful of person but gave nothing to his soul; here had been one that comforted his soul and racked him with her stupidity. He had come to doubt the existence of one woman of beauty, understanding, soul and virtue. And he had found her.

Enid sympathized when he told her of his loneliness and of his unhappy childhood and youth. It was her nature to sympathize, but she could understand the more because she was one of the women that had suffered for man's selfishness. She had no kind memories of her own father, who had given her and her mother no cause for kind remembrance. In a world of men, in which women were toyed with until they tired and then were ruthlessly broken and cast away, it was sweet to know a man that was truly fine and truly honorable and just, a man that was honest enough and courageous enough not to deny or condone the wickedness of men and good enough to redeem insofar as he could the sex.

Horace Bellamy had never had a father and for years he had been motherless; well, Enid would be father and mother and all to him. She had read Emerson on compensation. It was not so long ago since, as a high school girl, she had gathered courage from him, but she had begun to doubt him. And now

in her own life and in Horace's she was to realize the truth of his philosophy.

Horace, who had given himself up to self-commiseration, forgot his own sorrows in his sympathy for Enid and set about paying the debts that a harsh world owed to her. He could not undo the past; he could not bless her with an honorable father; he could not recall her mother from the grave any more than he could recall his own; but he could sweeten the present until memory of the past was cured of its bitterness. And so he did.

In the second year Horace suffered a severe business reverse. He was a paper jobber; the source of his supply failed and competitors undersold him. There must be at least a year of losses and they must be heavy even with his resource holding them at a minimum.

All this he concealed from Enid. The comfort and inspiration of her love kept him strong and in courage. He could fight it out and win and she need never know. She had already borne more than her share of sorrow.

But Enid saw that he was worried by the expense of the house and her clothes, which had never worried him before. He was satisfied with the dresses she had, whereas he had approved and encouraged when she was planning new ones. He disposed of one of their two cars and when she seemed disappointed invented an excuse: he was afraid they might lose prestige, he said, by what might appear to some persons as extravagance beyond good taste. Prosperous men were respected, he said, only so long as they escaped suspicion of vaingloriousness.

Enid was not deceived. She wanted to know what was wrong. Heavy investments were necessary, Horace said admissively, to insure large future profits. They must deny themselves some luxuries for a while. Enid was ready to make sacrifices, she said, for love of him, though it did seem that they had both made sacrifices enough.

But Enid had quickly learned to enjoy prosperity, as one does who has never had much to enjoy, and to do without things made her unhappy. Horace Bellamy would have criticized a woman who had had less to bear in the past; he sympathized with Enid when she could not conceal her depression. But his sympathy failed to inspirit her; rather it seemed to irritate her and deepen her dejection.

Horace Bellamy worried for his wife; losses grew heavier and the energy he should have spent in combatting them was wasted with worry. Some newspaper picked up a nasty rumor that he was on the verge of failure. It published it, thereby making it true. It meant virtually the end of his credit. And somebody of course would see it and hasten to tell Enid.

When he went home that night he found it had been unnecessary for anyone to tell Enid. She was in utter despair.

"You have deceived me long enough," she said; "what is the truth?"

Her words cut into his heart.

"The truth is," he said, "that my love can never fail—and I can always make a living for you, even if I have to work with these hands."

"I didn't know I was marrying a day laborer," she said with bitter sarcasm.

"My God, Enid," he said, wondering at the calmness of his voice, "I have never needed your faith and sympathy and love as I do right now."

"Faith," she said. "How can you expect faith when you have destroyed it? You have lied to me all along—and you want faith."

"I can't go on without it," said Horace Bellamy. "Do you think I deceived you to hurt you?"

"I know you deceived me."

"My God, girl," he cried, "can't you see you are my only hope! Can't you see I win and live with you and fail without you and die!" She was unmoved, regarding him as an uncompassionate judge regards a pleading convict. "Enid! Enid! Is there no mercy, no pity or love in you? What are you?"

The hard expression of her face did

not change in a single softening line. She might not have heard a word. After he had waited a long time for her to speak he got up and stumbled out to the street. He believed he was losing his mind. He had a vague idea that he was on the way to his office, for what reason he did not know. Perhaps he was not going there. He summoned all his strength and will to fight off the madness. Then he lost consciousness.

A policeman found him downtown, hatless, his clothes dirty and torn, mumbling like an idiot.

VI

Horace Bellamy opened his eyes to look into those of Doctor Core, who stood beside his bed. Nearly four weeks he had been in the hospital, he learned, and this man whom he had always disliked, but who had sought to humor him as a boy, tried to father him as a youth and offered to finance his education as a young man—this man had fought death and insanity away from him.

"How do you feel?" asked the doctor.

"Weak," said Bellamy, "but I guess I'm all right. I feel satisfied and ready to begin again wherever I must begin. I suppose I have lost everything."

"I don't know," answered the doctor. "I suppose so."

"Where is Enid?"

"At home, I suppose. She has not been here."

"Of course, there was nothing she could do," said Bellamy.

"No," the doctor replied, "there was nothing she could do." After a minute's silence he went on, "Stay here a few days until you are stronger. You will be all right." He held out his hand and Horace clasped it feebly. "I'll come and see you when I am out," he said.

In a few days Bellamy went home.

He lay down in the library and sent a servant to tell his wife he had come.

The servant did not return and his wife did not appear.

He rang and the servant answered.

"Did you tell Mrs. Bellamy I had come home?"

"Yes, sir," the man answered.

"Is she sick?"

"No, sir."

"Very well," said Bellamy. "That is all now."

He lay thinking for awhile and then went to his room for some things he needed. He was about to call for the car, but decided the trolley would do as well, so he walked away. At the corner he stopped and looked back once at the house. Then he went on. In an hour he was on the train.

It was many hours later that he reached his destination. He was weary and travel-stained. He had not eaten nor slept. It was night.

The town was small. Bellamy made his way up the little main street and without inquiry up the hill to the cemetery. He wandered here and there along the paths and between the shadowy stones and monuments until he found a little corner, shut away by a white fence and overgrown with grass and weeds. He fumbled at the gate latch, but it was rusted and would not yield. He gripped the gate with both his hands and tore it away, creaking and groaning.

In the little lot were three mounds, at the head of each a rough gray slab. Before the first of these stones he knelt, putting his hands on it and trying to read the dim lettering.

He fumbled for a match and lighted it, holding it close to the stone.

The match flickered out and Bellamy threw himself down in the weeds on the grave.

"My father, my father, forgive me," he sobbed.

The town was asleep when he sat up. From his pocket he drew a pistol and sat fingering it thoughtfully. Once he half raised it to his temple. "No," he said, "she must not suffer that."

He took up his satchel and made his way back almost to the town. There was a bridge, a railroad bridge, high above the river. Horace Bellamy

picked up a stone and put it in the satchel, then picked his way carefully on hands and knees out over the middle of the stream. There he sat down and after he had fastened the bag securely to his belt he dropped into the water.

VII

SOME months later Enid Bellamy sat at her writing desk and wrote slowly and with great care:

Dear,

I wonder if you have forgiven me for my cruelty. I wonder if you can understand and forgive a weak woman. From the moment you first came to tell me Horace was sick I loved you. I was brutal to deny you then. But I was afraid of him. Now he is gone. And I need you so.

She read it over several times and then sent it to Doctor Core.

REVENGE

By James Nicholas Young

HAVING given the matter my careful consideration for many months, I finally resolved to obtain the most terrible revenge I could evolve in my imagination: I would steal the man's wife!

For more than a year I carried on my subtle operations. It was arduous work for I did not love the woman. Indeed, as the time passed and I wormed my way into her heart, I came to dislike her intensely. One day a happy thought came to me. Why not make my enemy's life even more of a hell on earth than I had planned? Why not make that fiend suffer to the limit of human endurance? The thought was father to the deed and as a result I secured revenge which satisfied even my evil soul.

I did *not* elope with the man's wife.

IT has been said that the proof of the stupidity of the human race is, that after twenty centuries of Christianity, people go out and kill each other. This is not so. The real proof of mankind's invincible imbecility is that, after forty centuries of matrimony, people go out and marry each other.

ONE should never, under any circumstances, regret what one has done. One should merely strive to improve one's method of doing.

I HAVE often wondered how it felt to sit in one's own home, and smoke one's own tobacco, and kiss one's own wife. . . .

BHARTRIHARI SINGS OF LOVE

Translated from the Sanskrit by Leon Wyckoff

WHO can forget love on a sweet, slumberous evening in early spring, when the air is filled with the perfume of myrrh and sandalwood, and the boughs of the trees are covered with pale green foliage, and the birds are singing above us? Who can put it out of mind in the pleasant nights of the month of Chaitra, when the cuckoo trills and complains in the arbor of creepers, and poets walk in converse in the cool rays of the moon? Who avoids seeking the loved one when the slow, caressing breezes blow northward from Malaya, and the night is swooning with the odor of the mango-blossoms, and the very bees are drunken as they fly? . . . Yea, let us array ourselves and go among the ladies when the peacocks alarm the forest with their shrill cries, and the stars shine down upon the hundred roofs of the king's palace, and the jati flowers turn red upon their stems, and the heart leaps with joy and eagerness. Anon cometh the autumn, and the dark, chill nights of Nabhas and Shravana, and the rain and hail that fall upon the earth with a hideous noise. Let us love in the Springtime, each calling to his beautiful sweetheart at the gray end of the day.

SHE SLAPPED HIM

By John Trask

HE had kissed her innumerable times before. . . . .

In fact it was at her invitation that he had just kissed her.

She had curved her lips alluringly, and touched him with her slim hands, and brushed a smoothly fashioned shoulder against him.

She had tilted her head and tantalized him with her slanting gray eyes.

She had even allowed her mouth to repose a moment upon his.

And yet she slapped him.

. . . . . .

Her husband had entered the room.

THERE are only two kinds of people worth knowing: Brilliant successes and brilliant failures.

THE MYSTERIOUS SHE

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

SAXE understood women—that understanding which is a matter of instinct, and is never found to source from experience or from any extent of mature observation. A man must be born with the knowledge or own it not at all, for it is unattainable through time.

Yet Saxe reaped no benefit from the gift, if it may so be termed. He wrote love stories for a living, and the fact that his dolls were required to kick their feet, gesture with stiff hands, in accordance with stale cues and conventional string-pluckings, forced him to create with closed eyes and a grin. He was neither sensualist nor idealist; he observed life from a discreet angle, and preferred to procure cakes and champagne by a pretended agreement with the mob than to earn bread and ale by voicing his sincere scorn of it.

A sense of humour is a fine thing when it is employed by hands that can at times make a boomerang of it; and Saxe knew how to laugh at himself, and be patient with his own limitations.

But the stained and battered letter which one morning came to him from the outskirts of Labrador refused to float away upon any wind of amusement. It was from Will Garthwaite, the explorer, a bare acquaintance; and it made, Saxe thought, an extraordinary request.

Garthwaite occasionally frequented the same circle of semi-celebrities with whom Saxe idled, a rare man appearing at rare intervals, with a red, silent face, long, awkward arms, and a pathetic humility.

Saxe called up an old picture from his memory: a dozen complacent fellows in a room with a hearth-fire, discussing scraps and stories, and burning their cigars and the talk of the hour down to the butts. In the corner, hunched forward, listening like an eager child, sat Will Garthwaite with his shock of bright hair, and his vivid, blue eyes in which was reflected a rather wistful longing to add something to the passing smartness of passing men.

To him it was apparently quite wonderful that anyone could talk with such fluency, could make of conversation a jewel of such verbal glitterings as to confound even an expert as to its genuineness.

Saxe had liked the man at a glance, and, later, walked home with him. He remembered professing an interest, with polite hypocrisy, in the expedition upon which the adventurer was just then bound away. Their differences of nature may be put decently within the confines of a sentence: Saxe conveyed emotions which he was unable to suffer; Garthwaite suffered emotions which he could not convey.

And now after an interval of six months came this scrawl from a vague outpost of the North. Garthwaite, a stranger to that world where it is understood that simulated interest is merely an urbane cloaking of indifference, saw Saxe apparently as a stout friend. No doubt he had thought of him often and often in the frigid, empty spaces whither he had gone. And Saxe had almost forgotten the other's name!

The note betrayed in its clumsy, unshaded sentences a hunger for compan-

ionship. With unintentional bluntness it went on to ask of Saxe if he wouldn't interest himself in Garthwaite's wife, who was buried in the metropolis—"She's probably lonely, for she knows so few. I wouldn't ask it of anyone else, but you, I feel, are . . ."

Confound the idiot! was Saxe's thought; why hadn't he had the sense to stay at home? What was the good of junketting across snow-fields simply because no one else had done so? It was only children who were curious concerning physicalities. . . .

Saxe might have smiled at the letter, and forgotten it. But he didn't. No one is quite untainted by what is ironically called human-nature. Saxe hadn't any illusions regarding that material world which he could realize through his finger-tips, but the ghost of religion walked with him in the shape of trivial superstitions. He took his dreams seriously—even when he laughed at them.

And when that night he dreamt a lurid melodrama about Will Garthwaite and the unknown Mrs. Garthwaite, in which he played a necessary third part, he interpreted it in other terms than that of hot muffins and too much beer. He had a silly, fixed idea that it was required of him by Destiny to see this Mrs. Garthwaite. He had a premonition of something which he did not halt to analyze.

He picked up the letter and reread the address over his breakfast-coffee.

II

All the way to the prim, comfortable little house in the seventies Saxe had visioned conjectural figures in which to case Mrs. Garthwaite. He was interested unduly, he knew that; but he did not know why. When she stepped slowly through the doorway of the small reception-room, Saxe felt that his faith in premonitions was justified. No heady romancer, he yet knew that he was to see a good deal of Mrs. Garthwaite from this time on.

She was a tall woman, but there was no effect of stateliness in her height. Dusky hair, darkly smouldering eyes, a tender line to the lips—she had these. She looked straight before her with calm eyes seeking, and eyes unsuspecting of evil. She was lovely in a soft, silent way.

Saxe wondered what on earth had induced her to marry that honest oaf, Garthwaite. But he saw, too, that she was the sort of woman who retains her schoolgirl tables—that list in which love leads riches. He stopped there. He couldn't fathom her at the plunge. There was something about her that suggested—suggested—what was the word? Mystery! That illumined her for him, almost made her, by paradox, clear. A woman of mystery. Saxe understood at last the magnetism. He'd found the possibly impregnable fortress and was to give that impregnability trial with his wits.

"Mrs. Garthwaite," he said formally, "I am Nicholas Saxe, a friend of your husband. He has no doubt written to you about me. I have his recent letter in which he asks me if I can do anything toward your entertainment. I hope you are going to let me have that privilege."

"I—I see," she murmured, her brows in a perplexed wrinkle. She added with an alluring shake of her head: "But I don't really! My husband, you say? I hadn't heard . . . perhaps he meant one of his surprises. Won't you sit down?"

Absurd! Garthwaite had not even forewarned her. Saxe had the fear that he was going to feel himself a fool. He covered a potential retreat with forced lightness of manner, telling her with a little laughter of the explorer's note.

She heard him out with grave, quiet eyes, and once or twice her lips moved like a spring that bubbles from the earth yet is spared an overflow.

"How dear of Will!" she said softly, looking away into the shadows of the room. "How like him!"

Saxe felt a pang of envy; he would have thrilled to have had her say that of him. How adorable she was! To

be adored by anything so adorable! And evidently she was fond of that oaf, Garthwaite. It was more than fond, as was presently revealed.

"So you know my husband?" she asked. "And you have known him long? Isn't he splendid? I think so few people know him very well. He's quite a wonderful man—far too wonderful for me. I could not bear to let him go this time, only he's not happy when he's in the midst of civilization long, you know."

Was this his cue? Saxe privately queried. He took it on the chance.

"I've seldom met anyone more interesting," he declared.

And, by Jove! that was the truth.

After all, the fellow was unusual. Come to think of it, he hadn't appreciated him before.

"I like you for saying that," she said in her direct way. "I think we are going to be great friends, Mr. Saxe."

"I hope so. We have an object of mutual admiration to begin with," Saxe pursued.

She gave him a warm smile for that. "I'm glad Will wrote you. But I don't know how he guessed I was a—a little lonely. He doesn't know anything about me at all, you see."

When he rose to go, he rose with the realization that he had not placed her. She didn't fit comfortably into his indexed category. She was a simple, guileless soul who loved her husband with a child's unthinking devotion. And yet she wasn't. There was a subtone in her voice that hinted of something he hadn't discovered. She was a Sphinx. She was beautiful. She was glorious. She had set his blood aflame. He—hang it all!—he loved her.

III

EITHER to love or to hate demands at least some imagination; and hitherto women had been too obvious to Saxe to permit him to envelop them with the traditional fantasy. It is impossible to play the poet over a flower if you see no secret in the flower. But for the ensuing three months Saxe found his insight baffled and his passion correspondingly inflated.

At first he did his best to amuse her with amusements until he discovered that a simple comradeship was really all she desired. She was from some vague place in the West and knew hardly anyone in town. He took her to restaurants of the less blatantly bohemian order, to the parks where lovers on every bench looked into each other's eyes and thought they had found this world, to studio teas dominated by uncertain literary gentlemen who attempted to dress like Lord Byron and succeeded in looking like Lord Fauntleroy and by lady artists who were geniuses in everything except talent. There were plays and luncheons and outings. And then finally Saxe began to shun his club and dine with increasing frequency at the prim little house in the seventies.

Those charming informal dinners, the quiet talk over the candles, the long cigarette he smoked at the close, the music she played so gravely afterward, and, at the last, the simple parting, and the pleasure of her held hand and gentle smile—how delightful it all was! The woman was an angel. An angel mated to that oaf, Garthwaite.

The curious, the amazing, the bizarre fact was that their talk was all of Garthwaite. Saxe saw that he had taken the correct line in that first meeting. It was the only subject that ever enchanted her, the only one in which she was forever engrossed. They talked for unending hours of Garthwaite and his virtues, and did Saxe so much as find a new phrasing for a familiar characteristic, he was rewarded by the glow in her face. It was an acid reward, he reflected; a very sour piece of irony that he could only make love to the wife by standing before the husband's altar.

And as time went on, Garthwaite's vague self began to assume a definitely detailed aspect to him. Saxe felt as if he had lived with him for many years, as if he knew the man's minutest traits.

He might have been his brother. He began to admire him. And he was tragically jealous of him.

Several times he sought to put forward his own claims, but he ceased almost at the outset. He felt as if he were duelling with a baby. Carol Garthwaite was too good, too guileless by far. And yet was she? For the life of him Saxe couldn't tell, and in the presence of love he found himself oddly timid. He relished his secure moment in the bubble's heart too much to strike out frankly for perpetuity and risk destruction.

In any case, he was certain that Garthwaite was everything to her. She glorified him, she reverenced him, she stood in awe before his image. Saxe served only as choir in the cathedral where she was priestess. It was a melancholy situation. He wondered what would happen if he ripped off the mask and revealed the face of love. Perhaps—perhaps she knew it already. The deuce of it was he couldn't tell. Away with reason! He trod the lighter airs, was oblivious of all other concerns, wrote his love stories with a scandalous carelessness, enshrined his lady in a poet's visions. She was a woman of mystery.

IV

News from Garthwaite on the return trek had come; and one evening Saxe dined with the wife to discuss the husband's arrival. This was to be within the month, possibly within the fortnight. He was to make port at Newfoundland, thence to Boston, and so down to town.

Saxe was heavy in his heart. Why hadn't Garthwaite the decency to stay North and freeze to death? It was mightily inconsiderate of him to blunder back and interrupt Saxe's secret raptures. And even as he thought this he was deep in hateful panegyric.

"I heard a good story about Will the other day," he said. "Gordon, a friend of mine, heard it from someone else. This fellow—I forget his name—was on a minor expedition with Will a few years ago, and late one night when they were sleeping in an impromptu lean-to, he awoke. It was icy weather and even the fire looked sick. There was a scarcity of blankets, and he lay there thinking of the warm rooms and comfortable restaurants he had known.

"Suddenly he heard a faint sound, then felt an extra blanket lowered upon him. He opened one eye cautiously, and there was Will sacrificing some of his own coverings. Will didn't notice that the man was awake for a moment—he was quite still—and then at last he saw that one, silent eye, solemnly taking in the whole business. With a jerk he whipped away the blanket.

"'What the devil are you looking at?' he growled; and crawled back to his own bunk with the blanket, scowling, and grumbling under his breath."

Her eyes lighted.

"How good!" she said. "And how true of Will! He is miserable if anyone observes the presence of any sentimental kindness in him, and he'll go to any lengths to hide it. I'm glad you told me. I'm glad that there's someone who can appreciate him as I do."

He touched her hand across the table, and for a moment looked at her with an unwavering gaze. Then he dropped his eyes. As usual he had found favor through the proxy of his established rival. It was a wretched affair. And he didn't dare make an avowal for himself.

Later, over the coffee in the adjoining room, their talk was all of Will's home-coming. How to meet him, how best to prove the welcome in their hearts, were Carol Garthwaite's themes. She must have guessed something of Saxe's depression in spite of his surface cheerfulness, for suddenly she said in a voice with a faint shadow of a quaver in it:

"Oh, Nicholas, Will's arrival shan't make any difference to us, shall it? You know I've grown to like you and to realize how dear a friend you are after all these months, and—and I shouldn't—"

She stopped there, for his eyes were burning, and she saw what she had done.

"Carol!" he cried, "I've loved you, oh, I've loved you forever! You mean everything to me, I adore you!"

Then he kissed her. She made no resistance, but her face was paler.

After a little while she said:

"I knew you cared, but I didn't know how much. And I'm fond of *you*, Nicholas, but not fond enough."

"Dearest," said Saxe blindly, "let me stay here, let me hold you in my arms. I love you! Your dark eyes are more to me than they can be to—"

Her face grew apprehensive; there was a warning curve to the lips. Saxe drew himself up with a jerk on the very threshold of a smashing condemnation of that oaf, Garthwaite. He saw the hazards he had tempted. That would never do. She was too loyal, too devoted to the explorer to permit a word against him to pass unchallenged. Saxe knew he had stepped perilously close to ruin.

He rose to go. At the doorway, she plucked at his sleeve. He turned and saw a tender summons in her face. He held her close for a moment, and then went silently down to the street with his brain awhirl.

He couldn't make her out. She seemed fond of him, yet, as she said, not fond enough. . . . He knew that a woman can love more than one man at once, but that she must needs love each in a different way. Only one man may wholly possess her. The oaf, Garthwaite, did that. Hence, Saxe's confusion. For if so, why had she suffered his caresses, the accepted seals of passion? Was it to her a purely platonic expression? Why—why— Saxe with a groan admitted that he didn't understand her.

V

On the afternoon that Garthwaite was booked to arrive, Carol and Saxe were waiting in the station many minutes before the train was scheduled. She was elated, and the mood showed in her flushed cheeks and nervous manner. Saxe sat by in silent torture, biting his lip. How she loved the explorer! And yet how inconsistent she was! The memories of the last few weeks thronged upon his mind: the deepening tenderness, the firm softness of her clasped body, the kiss at parting. . . . He couldn't make her out.

She was pure, she was true, and yet she accepted these endearments without shame, or any apparent sense of guilt. She revered Garthwaite's memory, yet saw no violation in Saxe's kiss. And now she seemed to forget everything in the stir of the moment, seemed to ignore the fact that their waiting there was a symbol of the throttling of their incipient love-affair.

When the train pulled in, they stood by the gates, eagerly scanning the faces that came through. Stout old ladies waddled across the line, and brisk youths, and then at last the lean, familiar figure with the fiery hair unbared, the shy, sheepish smile, the gaunt, brick-red countenance.

Fumblingly Garthwaite kissed his wife, and turned to Saxe.

"Thanks very much, er—thanks," he said, awkwardly looking down at his feet, and shaking hands with his air of humility.

The woman's eyes fed upon his face; Saxe saw that. And yet he thought her look was strange. It was maternal, it was affectionate, it was worshipful; but there was something in the glance (or something lacking from it) that he couldn't quite fasten with a word.

The three moved across the station, and outside where hooting taxicabs, rumbling trucks, and the pushing, intense crowd swayed and jostled through the spaces of the street. Garthwaite walked with his head down, his long arms hanging by his side. He seemed almost frightened by the uproar.

At this juncture, a mail motor swung the curve unexpectedly. Carol leapt back and Saxe with her. Garthwaite remained stolidly in its path.

There flashed through Saxe's mind in that flying instant a multitude of hopes and fears. Yet, mastering them all, there came a gleam of distorted humour. The explorer who had faced death in the vast reaches of the icy latitudes, who had toiled through lush jungles, and played his hand against all the perils of Nature was to meet Death at last in a city street!

He did not know whether he thought these things simultaneously, or whether, indeed, they came to him later as figments rescued from his unconsciousness. But he knew that he hurled himself forward, flung one arm around Garthwaite's neck, and threw him backward. It was a successful endeavor as far as it went. The wheels pounded across Garthwaite's legs, but his body was safely out of reach.

Carol stood with eyes astare, her hands pressed against her ears, her lips trembling. A crowd sprang up in a seething chaos, and two policemen ploughed through, pushing a lane with careless hands.

Garthwaite looked up at Saxe with a frown. "What's all the bother for?" he complained weakly. "I'm quite all right, dammit! Tell them to leave me alone, won't you?"

And then he fainted. . . .

* * * *

At eight o'clock that evening Carol and Saxe were in the small music-room of the prim house in the seventies. Garthwaite was safely bestowed in a hospital with a broken leg. His weakened condition, due apparently to recent over-exertions, might keep him on his back for some time to come, went the report, but for the present he was doing nicely.

Carol showed in her face the strain she had undergone, but to Saxe it made her only the more lovable, the more to be cherished and protected. Well, he had cooked his own goose, he reflected, in accordance with the best Christian traditions: he had saved Garthwaite's life, and the play was over. He thought perhaps it would be wisest for him to leave her now. To stay with her any longer, at any time, would only heighten his misery, his impotence.

"Where are you going?" she asked. "Not—not home? Oh, Nicholas, don't go yet! I've so much to say to you. I haven't thanked you enough for what you did this afternoon. You saved his life. . . . You saved his life! I can never tell you all I owe you for that. Nicholas," she whispered, "Nicholas . . ."

He put his arms about this inconsistent piece of charm, thinking in his heart that it was for the last time.

"I can't bear not having you," he said huskily.

He felt her relax in his arms, and the blood began to hum in his ears.

"I love you," she said very low. "It was this afternoon that made me. I love you. I know now, I know now!"

Saxe's eyes were wild.

"Let me stay here, Carol," he pleaded, "I want you more than all the world."

"You force me," she whimpered, "I can't fight you always, can I?"

His heart was singing, and he paid no heed to that final remark. Besides he knew that women are always being forced—to do what they wish.

Then another consideration came into his mind, a quite astounding one.

"Carol," he said, "is it that you don't love Will any more?"

She stared at him with a queer look of surprise.

"Love him?" she echoed. "Why, I never loved Will! I admire him more than anyone I know. I think he's a wonderful personality. But it's purely platonic! I don't *love* him!"

Saxe was staring like a maniac; his mind was too confused to carry out thought in a straight line.

"And—and you do love me?" he stammered foolishly. "Why—I don't see—it's—why do you love me?"

"Dearest," said the mysterious she, "I love you because you're the only man who understands me!"

THE LACK

By Lillian Foster Barrett

I

ELEANOR RADFORD sat in her box at the Horse Show and vaguely watched the crowds of people sauntering to and fro or pressing closely in at the rail.

Eager, restless, curious, it was always the same crowd. Eleanor liked the Horse Show season; it was the one time she felt quite content with her lot. For as she sat there, she was conscious that she was pretty in her slight, fragile way, that she was well dressed, and wasn't that all that counted here? The admiration in the faces upturned to her box satisfied her of her effect.

Eleanor was a daughter of a hotel keeper on the fashionable Rhode Island coast, a man of coarse make-up who had played his young daughter hard for a wealthy match. He had failed, for Eleanor had developed unsuspected obstinacy at the last minute and repudiated the rich Seattle man, brought neatly to the point by Mr. Radford. Shortly after, she had left the coast resort and surrendered to a younger lover of equal wealth, but a man who had not the slightest intention of bestowing his name upon her in honorable fashion.

Eleanor had been happy in a way. The best in every line was what she had always wanted, and to be the mistress of one who was undoubtedly of New York's inner circle seemed a happier lot than to be the wife of a man of coarse western grain.

Eleanor had had a superficial boarding school education and at first had considered herself fitted to move in any circle. But little by little she had realized she lacked something—she wasn't sure what. She met none of the women of her protector's set, naturally, but as she watched them at a distance—at the opera and the theater in New York, at the Beach Club in Palm Beach—she realized bitterly that there was a *bel air* about them she could never hope to attain. It was a thing not of the mind that one could acquire with culture; not of the body that one could train; it seemed to be an instinct, a sub-nature that these children of fortune are born with.

So Eleanor looked at these women and envied; copied and failed.

But if John Craig did not present her to the women of his own set, he made up by bringing most of his men friends to her little apartment on the Drive. She had a ready intelligence, a quick wit that made things go. She was a charming hostess and yet—well, again—she was always conscious of that strange lack. Was it poise she needed? Ease?

John Craig seemed not to notice anything, for his devotion increased as time went on. And there were many of his friends who would have been quite willing to change places with John—she knew that for a fact. They all professed in the open or otherwise the greatest admiration for this little New Englander that John had run across so by accident that summer at the Pier. Still, Eleanor worried.

Tonight at the Show she had been playing hostess to a number of these men and had as much a sense of success and respectability as any of the young matrons presiding in the neighboring boxes. There was a temporary

lull now, for John and the others had gone to the rail to get at closer range a new stallion John had just added to his stud. She was glad of the brief rest and let herself drift on the current of half-formed thoughts.

Then her eyes rested on a slight figure standing below. She recognized at once Ledyard Harding and felt a strange glow as she realized that his attention was fixed on her.

Ledyard Harding was a man of forty-two or three, the undisputed leader of New York's best set. Polished, easy, he was the aristocrat through and through. It was evident in the slight droop of the shoulders, the clear-cut features, the wonderful hands.

Eleanor remembered him from the time she had been ten years old when he had spent one summer at her father's hotel. She had remembered him always and followed his career in the newspapers. He undoubtedly dominated society, and was held the touchstone by which all newcomers were tried. He stood for caste and upheld that caste at all costs. Eleanor had seen him at many affairs the last few years and always had a strange feeling that he recognized her, that he was sizing her up by his own standards, and she invariably shrank from any direct encounter with him for this very reason.

But somehow, tonight, she felt a little more secure of herself, of her position. The years had taught her much. Might she not pass according to his ideas? In his approval of her she might read that the lack she felt in herself had been made up, that her efforts to become of the best had been rewarded.

His eyes were fixed coolly but steadily upon her, and before thought could become clearly formulated in her mind she had bowed slightly. He took off his hat with easy grace—a grace that even John had always failed to quite reach—and in a minute he was beside her in the box. She half rose awkwardly, with a full sense of her awkwardness and the knowledge that she should not have risen at all, and succeeded in dropping her scarf. He covered her confusion quietly.

"How is Carlo?" he asked with a smile.

She gave him a grateful look. He had put her at her ease at once by reverting to a homely topic.

"Carlo is dead," she answered. "I am surprised you remember him. It was many years ago."

"You were such a little girl," he continued, "and Carlo was such a big dog."

They smiled into each other's eyes, but Eleanor felt a strange sadness settle upon her. She had wanted so many times to know this man, had pictured so often their meeting. And she had promised herself to show him how much the years had done for her. The opera, books, art, French—yes, she had planned to dazzle him when the day came that they should meet. And now, by the very simplicity of his beginning she saw her mistake. It was not the frills of life that counted; it was the ability to take all the relations of life direct and straight—and yet—it was more than that. It was that illusive something once more, and again she felt helpless in face of the fact that that "something" could never be hers. She became confused, responded almost incoherently to even his smallest remark and finally felt herself on the verge of tears.

Ledyard Harding had been watching her kindly but intently. As he saw her sensitive lips begin to quiver he leaned closer.

"Eleanor," he said, and smiled a little as he used the name. "What is the matter? Can't you tell me?"

She struggled a moment to put down her emotion.

"You know—I almost think I can," she answered at length.

"For Carlo's sake," he pleaded, and then they both laughed.

As she still continued silent he tried to help her out.

"What have the last five years brought you?"

"A lover," she said drily.

"But morals aside—" he cut in.

"Oh! A continual striving after the best. I have wanted so much the—you know—you know what it is—the *bel air*—you see, even my accent falls just short. I have struggled and struggled—and I have failed. Just now—when you came into the box—a little thing—but it tells. Jack doesn't notice it—nor the others. Their perceptions are perhaps not of the keenest. But you—you *do* notice it. I'm pretty, I suppose—and I'd hate to tell you how much I squander on my gowns—but when all is said and done I fall short. What—what is it?"

She turned to him with her odd appeal and he felt the kindest part would be to face the question with her.

He accepted her statement of her lack for he knew inevitably that what she said was true. He knew hundreds of women just like her, but he had never known one before who so thoroughly understood her own position. Another man, less fine, would have protested. A woman less keen than Eleanor, perhaps, would have wanted him to.

As it was—"I know exactly what you mean," he said with understanding. "But if it is possible for anyone to get there I think you can. I have watched you indirectly these last few years. You are nearing the goal."

"I'm beginning to think now it isn't a goal, but a phantasm," she said sadly. "Tonight, before you came to me, I felt quite secure of myself, of my hold on the things that counted, and then—a few words with you and all that fell away. I am only the little country girl after all, and no amount of veneer could alter the grain underneath."

But at that he did protest.

"Eleanor, you *can* do it. Go on as you have been going—make yourself the exception to the rule, and—"

Her eyes brightened, "I sail for Europe tomorrow for a year. I shall make every effort—strain every nerve—and then come back to you for a decision—"

"But why *my* decision?" he asked quickly.

"Because I think *you* know," she said quickly. "I don't know why, but I do."

"Yes," he answered thoughtfully. "I think I do—infallibly."

"They say—" here she hesitated.

"Well?" he helped her out.

"That you have never had an affair with any one except in your own set. Is it true?"

"Yes," he answered, and then turned to greet John Craig, who was just entering the box.

The good-byes were casual, but there was one by-play of significance.

"I give you a year," said Ledyard as he pressed Eleanor's hand.

Again she half rose awkwardly and dropped her fan. He picked it up gracefully and restored it to her. Their eyes met and they smiled at each other in an amused way.

"Thank you," she said, and this time she felt no embarrassment at her clumsiness.

II

Six weeks later John Craig was killed in an automobile accident in Paris. There followed for Eleanor a period of intense suffering, for she had cared in a way for this lover of hers. They had been comrades as well as lovers and she felt at times after the accident that she would die from sheer loneliness.

There gathered about her in those days of her grief many of John's friends, men she had entertained so frequently in New York and who happened to be in Paris at the time. Some she knew were actuated purely by friendly impulse; others she felt were simply killing a decent length of time before making proposals of a more than friendly tenor. It was the natural thing, of course, that it would come about that someone else should "look out for her" some day, just as John had done, but the thought caused her a sharp revulsion. She ended by leaving Paris, and so shut out of her existence all these men with their perplexing claims.

At first she did not allow herself to

think of Ledyard Harding; it seemed, somehow, not quite right to the man who had been snatched out of her life so suddenly. But at length there began a reconstruction period in which Ledyard was the dominating influence.

She settled in Vienna and there deliberately set herself to the perfecting of her nature. She had the best teachers of every sort and spent hours in deep thought, attempting to piece out a scheme of philosophy by which she could live in just the right way. Perhaps the thing that she was seeking had to begin within and then work its way out.

She smiled a little at her methods but applied herself no less diligently to the complete carrying out of them. And as the year drew to a close she began to feel that success might be hers, for it seemed that an alteration really had been affected in the grain of her make-up.

But as she thought of Ledyard Harding she allowed herself to think only as far as his approval of her. As to their relations after that—well—this always brought her a sharp little pang. "I shall give you a year," he had said. What did he intend to convey?

But a fever of restlessness would come upon her when she tried to figure it all out, a restlessness that made the few months that stretched before her empty and interminable. So she gave up thinking along those lines and was far happier as a result.

She had planned to return to New York in the fall. "The Horse Show season!" she had said to herself and the thought brought its trail of memories. That last night at the Garden was very vivid in her mind those last weeks of preparation before her return. The image of John Craig, young, confident, eager, was constantly with her and she felt sad and tremulous, and wondered if, after all, she was ready to go back. For her sadness seemed to destroy that confidence in herself which she had so laboriously built up, and she shrank from the keen scrutiny and critical judgment of Ledyard. Worry brought on a slight illness and she delayed her departure.

"When the Horse Show season is over," she said and waited.

The Paris *Herald* brought the news a month later of the extended tour around the world of Mr. Ledyard Harding. "Mr. Harding has been suffering from something of a nervous breakdown caused by the recent pressure of events on the Stock Exchange, and his physicians have ordered two years of travel abroad. Mr. Harding has been the undoubted leader of New York society for a number of years and his absence is the cause of much regret, etc., etc."

This brought Eleanor a mingling of feelings. There was relief which merged into disappointment and there was apprehension as to the real state of Ledyard's health. Two years! What should she do with them? They stretched before her, endless and tedious. After all, wasn't she giving the best of her years in the pursuit of something that might never be hers? Would not the following out of her existence as she had begun it have brought her more real tangible happiness.

She thought of her life with John. She thought of those other men in Paris. And then she thought of Ledyard Harding. The slightly stooping figure, the perfectly modulated voice, the fine hands! No, she was making no mistake. Three years were very little to offer upon the altar of fine attainment that would bring her within range of a man of that sort.

"Is it true you have never had an affair outside your own set?"

And she remembered the answer had come back quite steadily, "Yes."

So she threw herself with renewed zeal into her studies. She followed the newspapers eagerly. The accounts of Ledyard's reception in Oriental countries and the general furor he created wherever he went among the people who counted proved to her that her alarm in regard to the state of his health was quite unfounded. His tour

proved to be a triumph, so she exerted herself the more with the realization of his worth.

III

A YEAR and six months passed, and Eleanor felt herself at last ready to stand the test. She felt she had attained that "something" she had been seeking so long, as much from concentration on Ledyard, perhaps, as from any more active methods she employed. But she had it, that she knew; and if at times she felt she had sacrificed a certain youthful spontaneity and exuberance in the getting it, she didn't care. The last six months of her apprenticeship she planned to give up entirely to rest and thought.

Then one day Tom Davis had arrived upon the scene—Tom of Seattle fortune upon whom her father had wanted to bestow her so many years ago. It was the same genial Tom—a little heavier, a little older, but otherwise unchanged. He was passing through Vienna by accident, had heard of her and called on the chance of it being the Eleanor Radford, his quondam sweetheart.

Eleanor had seen him gladly. Curiosity had actuated her in a measure, and then besides, she had been lonely these three years in Vienna and had felt the past pulling at her heartstrings so often. She always connected Tim with her father, who had died soon after she had left home. She had thought much of her father recently and had come to realize a little the grief she had brought upon him.

"You've become quite a lady, my girl," said Tom as he held her off at arm's length to look at her.

And she had smiled at the homeliness of his remark and measured her own progress by it.

When they had talked a while—and it was surprising how easily they accepted each other in their present relation—Tom rose to go.

He hesitated.

He obviously had something else to say and couldn't bring himself to the point.

Finally he blurted it out.

"When he died—" he began and then stopped.

"Well?" said Eleanor sadly.

"I thought you'd be pretty down, so I hurried over to Paris as soon as I could—I thought you might need money——"

Eleanor shook her head.

"I had a settlement," she answered.

"And I wanted to tell you I'd marry you whenever you said."

"Oh!" Eleanor's eyes showed gratefully and she made a little gesture of surprise.

"Eleanor—" he came over to her eagerly. "Has there been any one since John Craig?"

"No," she answered readily.

"Is there going to be?" he persisted.

She put her hand over her eyes. "I don't know," she said helplessly.

He took her arm roughly and pulled her hand from her eyes.

"Eleanor," he cried. "Look at me. I'm not much on morals—but I'm damned practical. If a woman takes one lover, well and good. But when she takes a second, there's a third and fourth ahead of her. I know it and you know it—Good God! But—" here he dropped her hand and turned away with a sigh and a grim smile. "I'd marry you if you'd had a dozen. Once more, Eleanor, will you have me?"

She drew a quick breath and shut her eyes.

What he said was an echo of what had been in her own mind since Craig's death, and she now let herself get the full bitterness of the truth of it.

Then as she opened her eyes again and they rested on the heavy features and coarse mouth of the man before her she felt a quick revulsion against him. He was so distinctly of the people and could never be knowing of the best that life had to offer. That "something" she had spent three years in acquiring was quite outside his ken. No, no—better a month, a week, an hour with a man like Ledyard than a

whole respectable lifetime with a man like Tom.

There was a faint superiority in her tone as she answered him.

"It can't be—I can't explain, for you wouldn't ever understand—"

"All right," he said kindly. "But if you should ever want me—my London banker—"

She cut in on him.

"I shan't, Tom. I shall follow out my life as I began it." At that he left her.

IV

Ledyard Harding was in London. Eleanor read of his reception there, also that he was to return to New York on a certain steamer. Eleanor contrived to catch the steamer preceding his and found herself on the way home before she had a chance to realize what was really happening.

It was a stormy passage and Eleanor kept her stateroom for practically the whole trip. So, she had ample time to think. Her dismissal of Tom now seemed inevitable; she wondered that she could have wavered even for a second. And Ledyard Harding? Did he expect her? "I shall give you a year," he had said and she had dallied and kept him waiting.

But she felt somehow that he would understand her hesitancy in coming to him the end of that year, and she felt that he knew she would be among the first to greet him now upon his return. They would come together now with a fuller understanding of each other that would more than compensate for the years of waiting.

The night before the boat was due to dock Eleanor went on deck. The storm had abated and the sky was a deep blue with here and there a tiny star twinkling in its depts. The calm seemed almost unnatural after the noise and confusion of the preceding days.

Eleanor gave herself up to the beauty and peace of it all as she leaned upon the rail and felt the slow palpable movement of the vessel.

Her mind was at rest; the struggle and striving of the last few years were over, and she had attained her end. There remained but to try her success by the touchstone of Harding's judgment. She smiled complacently and closed her eyes. Not the least evidence of her achievement was the ability to correlate properly thought and action. The motivating force of idea furnished easily the energy for action and she was never aware of awkward transitions. Eleanor had set this down as the fundamental of her success. Destroy that and—but no!

She was conscious at that point in her reflections that a man was walking up and down the deck near her. She had been too engrossed in her own thoughts during the trip to speculate at all in regard to the identity of her fellow passengers.

This man, however, showed himself curious and in the next turn carried his promenade even closer to her.

She raised her eyes as she felt him within a few feet of her. She recognized at once Billy Severn, a man in Ledyard Harding's own set, but of quite different grain. Eleanor had met Billy once, years before at a meet somewhere on Long Island. He paused an imperceptible second now and the two hung in mute expectation.

In that second, Eleanor felt herself in a panic.

Did Billy remember they had met, or was it that—

She trembled in the balance of indecision and then bowed slightly.

Billy took off his hat and stepped forward smiling. But at that point, Eleanor caught sight of another figure that had been hovering in the background, a witness to the whole little by-play. The slight stoop of the figure, the graceful carriage were unmistakable. It was Ledyard Harding.

"Allow me to introduce you," he said, as he stepped forward. "Miss Eleanor Radford—Mr. William Severn."

Eleanor flushed deeply, made a feint as if to shake hands with Harding, and then drew back and adjusted her cloak.

"But Mr. Severn and I have met—al-

ready—" she protested. "He—I—"

"Of course," said Severn. "In Paris, wasn't it?"

And Eleanor knew from the tone of his voice he had forgotten her absolutely, that she was to him but a woman who had failed to repudiate his advances. She felt herself blundering into further explanations and then realizing the inevitable tangle of it all turned to Harding.

"I thought you were booked for the next steamer," she faltered.

"I was," he said. "Good fortune sent me over ahead of time."

They looked at each other steadily. The whole thing seemed trivial on the surface but it was fraught with tremendous import. Eleanor felt her self-confidence slipping away.

She had failed—failed pitiably. Her three years' struggle had brought her nothing, only perhaps a greater sensitiveness in the appreciation of her failure. The incident just witnessed by Harding took its tone from hers. A woman of his own set would have carried the matter off supremely, in that she would have risen above (simply through the force of being what she was) any suggestion as to a wrong interpretation being put upon it.

Eleanor gauged her failure by the immense despair that came to her with the realization of it.

Harding saw her now as worthy no longer of even direct dealing. Hence his tone of almost unctuous flattery.

"Had I known you were on board, I should not have lingered so long below."

Eleanor looked into his eyes; they were hard and bright.

"How long are you over for?" he asked.

"A week or so to settle up some business," she forced herself to answer. "I am going directly back. I am to be married."

"Oh!" He raised his brows delicately. "My congratulations."

He did not ask the name of the man.

Eleanor felt goaded by his indifference to lay herself open to the full force of his contempt.

"Mr. Tom Davis, of Seattle. I just left him in London," she said, and her voice seemed to have lost something of its softness.

There was almost a harshness in it as she went on, "Do you remember him? He used to stay at father's hotel when you did."

Mr. Harding politely tried to recollect Mr. Tom Davis, and then apologized when he failed to do so.

"At any rate," cut in Billy Severn, "Mr. Davis is in London. You're here. Will you dine with us?"

"I promised Mrs. Winford tonight—I'm so sorry," put in Ledyard with the most charming of smiles.

"Then how about a *tête-à-tête?*" said Billy eagerly.

"Jolly!" said Eleanor.

Ledyard withdrew gracefully. Billy put his hand on Eleanor's arm.

"Let's walk," he suggested. "By the way, *have* we ever met?" he said and smiled warmly into her eyes.

"No," she answered, and wasn't quite sure what prompted the lie.

This gave Billy a certain sense of security.

They walked up and down for a while.

Then—"By the way, *is* there a Mr. Tom Davis?" he asked slyly, pressing her arm. "I—hope—not."

The words were deliberate. Eleanor took from them everything he intended.

"I—don't—know," she answered at length, avoiding his insolent eyes. "I haven't quite decided."

THE STRANGER

By Hinson Stiles

THE house party was well attended, but altogether a boresome affair. As I entered the ballroom, I suddenly came upon a man standing alone. He was looking at the dancers, a trace of amusement in his eyes, the suggestion of a smile on his sensitive mouth. I guessed he was laughing at the light-headed crowd—but I may have been mistaken.

He was a stranger, that was certain. I don't believe that I ever saw a man just like him before at any of these parties. Not that he was so very different in appearance, but there seemed to be a something hard to define about the fellow that worried me. He was so silent and good to look at. Yet he wasn't handsome in the accepted sense.

I wanted to meet this strange person. I determined to know him. After I had talked but five minutes with him, following the hostess' introduction, I found out who he was. It was a terrible shock. He was a gentleman.

SONG: OLD STYLE

By George Halleck

I SANG a song upon a time
To make my lady smile:
O, I hae sung a hundred songs,
But only one worth while!

Her smile is like the flush of dawn
Or the bursting of a flower,
Her smile is like the moonrise
At the midnight-hour.

I sang a song upon a time
That drew a smile frae her:
O, I wouldna barter her smile away
For white silver!

DEDUCTIVE RATIOCINATION

A DETECTIVE STORY

By Kingsley Moses

I

RHINELANDER OTT was consumed with ambition. That, during his forty-odd years of mortal life, he had not been completely devoured by the flame of his mastering mania is testimony to the asbestos-like hardihood of his constitution.

For, throughout all of those forty and odd years, with the possible exception of the year immediately succeeding his advent into the world, he had pursued the mysteries of deductive ratiocination with a zeal that was entirely extraordinary.

For Rhinelander Ott was a born detective. His first cry, shrilled through the bleak atmosphere of a Third Avenue flat, had sounded suspiciously like "Ha!"

Only natural ineptitude and inexperience in the proper methods of labial enunciation prevented his coherent voicing of the natural sequence: "I have yuh in me powah."

Scarce had the first year passed, however, before his superior and superlative powers began to evidence themselves. He learned quickly, too quickly his loving parents believed. From scientific experiment he deduced that pulling a cat's tail could prove painful of consequence, from practical research he discovered that gas stoves may be hot, after careful probing he learned that a thumb easily inserted into a mousetrap may not equally easily be withdrawn. He ran the whole gamut of trial and error.

Not until his fourteenth month, though, were his rare abilities fully illustrated. It happened in this wise.

Hungered, Rhinelander Ott sought feebly but pertinaciously for his nourishing bottle. The touch of a round rubber tube, bulbous in shape, between his lips was invariably followed, this he had already adduced, by a welcome and satisfying internal flood of warm liquid.

To find such rubber tube was then his obsessing object.

Eventually his quest was rewarded. The tube, similar in shape, similar to the touch of almost toothless gums, was discovered and promptly applied to the oral orifice. But the result was disappointing. The sweet, warm flood of sustenance failed to flow. Gnawing tentatively, Rhinelander Ott effected an incision, but with result even more dismaying. An acrid taste, a blotch of dead black down dingy-black rompers, betrayed the error of his way.

Ink, discovered Rhinelander, imbibed internally, is neither pleasing nor nourishing. A fountain pen filler, half charged, is not equivalent to a nursing bottle, though each sports a rubber bulb.

The astute psychologist, the student of adolescence or genetics, might have drawn correct and weighty conclusions from this experience. He might have forecast the misadventures that were destined to cloud future life. He might have predicted a series of mishaps. But, as doctors of genetics are in Third Avenue as rare as a dollar in Greenwich Village, and as the parents of the youthful prodigy considered psychology as some abstruse heretical

teaching distasteful if not positively damning to good church people, young Rhinelander Ott was doomed to a career that should suffer seven times the blights of the sevenfold blights of Pharaoh.

Maturing, he fell prey to the multiple deceits of childhood. A dollar at the sidewalk's brim a silver dollar was to him, and nothing more. Trial and error, even up to his forty-oddth year, never taught him that the dollar might be firmly fastened by chewing gum to the end of a strong if unobtrusive thread. A quarter on the counter of a cigar showcase was a fetching and persuasive lure; even when, trial and error again, it proved that the quarter was glued to the reverse side of the glass. Youthful philatelist, as all are at some stage, he never failed to request, whenever offered, a "Russian stamp." That the generous donor's reply was invariably a swift and painful pressure of heel upon Rhinelander's sensitive foot dampened trustfulness not a whit. Older he wasted many nickels telephoning in answer to calls left by Mr. Trout at Rector 4600, Mr. Fox at Tremont 2000, Mr. Stone at Madison Square 3846, or Mr. Hyde at John 62. That the replies came variously from the Aquarium, the Bronx Zoo, a jeweler's and a furrier's seemed to Rhinelander far from funny.

Always when asked if he knew Arthur he inquired trustfully: "Arthur who?" And when told that the well-known Arthur Mometer was the gentleman in question he always felt grieved, if not really insulted. He sniffed sweet boutonnieres from which spurted ill odors, he inhaled fragrant Havanas that exploded up his nose with a bang, he quaffed bumpers of beer from receptacles so subtly punctured with minute holes that the refreshment poured copiously over his bosom. He was, in short, tri-weekly initiated into the Benevolent and Fraternal Order of Goats.

Nor was any devious japery so repugnant to him, nor so frequently perpetrated upon him, as that of addressing him by his surname, prefaced, not with the grandiloquent title of baptism, but merely with the initial letter of that name. R. Ott led a hard life.

But over all vexations his spirit rose supreme. He was consumed with ambition. Courage and vigor and pertinacity never deserted him. Baffled, he bounced back again like that ancient Greek worthy who gained strength from every downfall. Fooled, he plunged forward to even more obscure pitfalls.

He was a very drunkard for delusion.

Perseverance cannot, ultimately, be denied. Maturity found Rhinelander a member of the Finest, a full-fledged guardian of the law. His rookie days, passed in sincere quests for left-handed revolvers, toe manacles, and elastic jimmies, left no sour scent on his disposition. Even when sent to a "lodging-house" on the southwest corner of 59th St. and Fifth Avenue to arrest a band of illiterate "black-handers" he was not seriously discouraged by finding himself in the Plaza Hotel. That he should prosecute his search for the Italian miscreants from sub-cellar to roof was merely a matter of duty; and the complaints to Headquarters by the management feazed his spirit not the least.

Indomitable ambition spurred him onward; no job was too difficult, no assignment too stiff. And when opportunity offered for a bit of detective work his spirit thrilled and soared.

Eventually he gained the goal he sought, plain clothes with the shield under his armpit.

Long days he lounged about railway stations, guarding the exit from Manhattan; long hours he sweated in telephone booths calling a limitless list of numbers, one of which might possibly furnish the precious clue; long nights he bullied suspects in the barred back-rooms of saloons.

And in the course of five years he had two triumphs to his credit: the capture of a drunken hobo who had flashed a hundred dollar bill across a

bar, and the arrest of a blackmailer who had been imprudent enough to drop his false whiskers beneath the detective's feet.

But, alas, the paths of glory lead but to the gate. And Rhinelander got the gate in summary manner.

One August night he discovered a callow youth, crumpled and already cold, at the door of a mean tenement. In the youth's dead hand, grasped away in the fierceness of a last struggle, were the shreds of a tattered coat lining. On the lining was still visible the name of a fashionable tailor and three initials, presumably those of the owner, who must have committed the assault.

Within an hour the assassin was run down. That he proved to be the cousin of the Police Commissioner made not the slightest difference to Rhinelander Ott. He saw his duty and he did it; the young man was lodged in a cell under the charge of homicide.

Next day, however, when the young "criminal's" landlady testified that the coat from which the lining had been ripped had this twelvemonth been given to the Salvation Army, and had proceeded thence on an unknown pilgrimage, our friend Rhinelander was made to pay the penalty for his zeal. Brass buttons, shield, revolver, and night stick departed from him forever.

But he left the department with a recommendation. The Commissioner could not refuse that.

II

Such was the past history of Rhinelander Ott. Discover him now, at the rise of the second curtain, stealthily padding the richly padded corridors of the Madame de Maintenon Hotel.

Private detecting is the happy hunting ground of all departed cops. In that vocation is found warmth, shelter, comfort, and, at least, a minimum wage. It was to such a soft berth that Rhinelander Ott had fallen heir.

Not that the post of private detective in the Maintenon was a particularly soft snap; for the morals of this metropolitan caravansary were above and beyond reproach. Strange couples, those not personally and intimately known to the management, were required almost to produce their marriage certificates. There was nothing shady about that hotel.

It was the particular, if not the only, duty of Rhinelander Ott to see to it that no moral breach was committed within the sacred confines. He did his duty well. How many belated husbands, silently seeking their legal beds after midnight, had been collared and questioned by the house detective may never be known. How many wives, stealing in from a bridge or a ball, had been trailed relentlessly to their proper doors can never be estimated.

In any event, for ten years now, Rhinelander Ott had discharged his duty with diligence. He had become as much of a fixture in the lobby as the chipped stone urns, as familiar in the upper halls as the vacuum cleaners.

Tonight, black-garbed, derby-hatted, and on noiseless felt slippers, Rhinelander Ott had just completed his semi-hourly patrol of the eighth floor and paused at the heavy glass door which led to the stairway down to the seventh. Opposite him, almost at his shoulder, was the oaken-polished steel door of a small bedroom, a bedroom jammed in by the architect at the last moment, and designed for the occupancy of one, and one only. The transom above the door was open; and as Rhinelander started to descend his keen ear caught the sound of a masculine voice.

"Ha!" A mystery, indeed. Conversation at this hour of the night, and in a single room!

Ear against the suspicious door, our hero listened.

Yes, there was a reply, a soft, sibilant reply in a foreign tongue.

Steel tense the detective listened. There could be no doubt.

A man and a woman were in that room.

What were they saying? Every fibre

a-quiver, the detective listened to hear.

The soft bass sounded again, now quite distinct through the crack by the jamb of the door: *"Le semana tiene siete dias."* Something like that, anyhow.

Came in a moment the vibrant and liquid answer: *"Los nombres de los dias de la semana son; domingo, lunes, martes, miercoles, jueves, viernes y sabado."*

A woman, yes.

A man and a woman in that single room. Lovemaking, too; and in a foreign language. Foul immorality was bestirring. Rhinelander Ott was American enough to know that these foreigners were chronically and congenitally immoral anyhow.

"El domingo es el primer dia de la semana—"

But the house detective had heard enough.

Cat-footed, he hurried downward past the seven floors beneath.

Breathless he ricochetted from stairway to desk.

"Elmer," he gasped, cannonading his question at the night clerk; "Elmer, who's in 843?"

"Why?" queried the disturbed Elmer, smoothing his shining hair, and adjusting his neat bow tie. "Why?"

"There's two people in there, and it's only given one, generally."

"That's right." Elmer shot his cuffs with a gracious condescension. "It's never given to more than one; 843 is a single room."

"Well, it's not single tonight. There's a man and a woman in there making love most scandalous—and in some foreign language, Dago, or Wop, or something."

"Oh, no, I think not, Mr. Ott." Elmer was ever punctilious. "But let me see."

Carefully the night clerk thumbed over the register.

"Ah, yes," with manicured thumbnail the night clerk ran down his page. "843 is rented for the night to young Mr. Harding, Gerald Harding, son of the big coffee man."

"Well, he's got a woman in there with him."

"Impossible, my dear Ott. Young Mr. Harding is well known as the leader of the big Bible class at the Marble Church."

"Bible class, or no Bible class, I tell you, Elmer, he's got some foreign girl in there. Come and see. Leave the night boy on the desk."

Bored to extinction, the night clerk followed the panting sleuth. Together they ascended in the elevator, and with due injunction to the boy to close the lift door softly, they tiptoed down the hall.

Outside the suspected door they halted, the detective's finger to his lips.

Inside sounded a man's voice.

Elmer, the night clerk, stiffened.

"Hoy es lunes," sounded the mellow bass, *"el primer dia de trabajo de la semana—"*

"That's her name," whispered Rhinelander Ott; "Semana, that's what he's been calling her right along."

The night clerk frowned grimly.

And then, in clear, mellifluous, caressing tones came the reply, a reply toned in the whispered chant of a sweet contralto: *"tres por la mañana y una por la tarde."*

Thump!

The fist of the night clerk beat on the resounding metal.

"Mr. Harding, let me in!"

"What is it?" challenged the man's voice from inside.

"Let me in, Mr. Harding!"

"What do you want? Who is it?"

"It is I, the night clerk."

"What do you want?"

Elmer, the night clerk, flushed hotly.

"I want you to open this door immediately, Mr. Harding. I have the house detective with me; and I can't stand for any such conduct!"

A hurried scuffling of bed clothes was distinguished. Then bare feet thumped on the floor and across the narrow room. Clicking the door swung open, and a touselled head peered through the crack.

"What do you—"

But the detective's shoulder was at the half open portal and the door swung back abruptly.

Headlong, Rhinelander Ott plunged into the lighted room.

Quickly his eyes swept the bed, the four corners. There was no one there, certainly.

Two steps took him to the closet door. No one in there certainly.

On hands and knees he peered beneath the narrow bedstead. Grabbing the tumbled bedclothes, the detective swept them back with a single motion. Again no one.

An inspiration. Jumping to the window he threw the sash to its full height and peered out on the spidery fire-escape. Eight stories down dropped its skeleton framework; just above, the cornice jutted over abruptly. There was no exit there, certainly.

Rhinelander Ott turned ferociously toward the amazed guest.

Elmer, the night clerk, still blocked the entrance door.

"What've yuh done with 'er, young fellah?" In moments of excitement Rhinelander forgot the accent that had been cultivated so carefully to harmonize with the dignity of his employment. "What've yuh done with the girl?"

Young Mr. Harding pulled at his rumpled hair.

"What girl?" he interrogated puzzled.

"Yes, we heard you talking to a lady," interpolated Elmer, half-apologetically.

Something, evidently, was wrong; and Elmer was trying to crawfish gracefully.

"I was talking to no lady," came the indignant reply.

Mr. Harding was beginning to swell visibly inside his mauve pajamas. He was no stripling, this big, blond-haired young man.

Rhinelander Ott felt tenderly for his brass knuckles.

"Come clean, young fellah," he growled. "Where's the girl?"

"I tell you there is no girl, and—"

The night clerk took a half step forward and laid his hand soothingly on the young man's arm.

"Mr. Harding," he purred, in words that dripped sugar—or at least saccharine—"Mr. Harding, we mean no offense but both the house detective and me—er, I, heard you talking to some lady, in a foreign language; and, moreover, heard her reply."

And, suddenly, Mr. Harding laughed. His big bass boom echoed down the corridor and re-echoed back in volume that threatened to rouse the whole house.

"Lady," he roared, "lady! oh, *rats!*"

Turning to the table by his bedside he pointed to a small phonograph.

"Lady," he bellowed, "there's your lady. And here's your mystery."

And he held out a paper bound booklet entitled: *Spanish in Twenty Lessons, Taught by Graphophone.*

THE woman who loses her sense of moral values always makes the best hostess.

NO woman knows the true meaning of love. No woman wants to.

THE CONQUEROR

By Owen Hatteras

THE soul of Bill Johnson as he entered the Tip Top saloon was filled with a queer unrest. He was going to get drunk. He was to drink seven glasses of beer and seven slugs of whiskey. If he was still sober after that he was going to drink a cocktail. When he had achieved the towering poise of a man who can walk up to a policeman and pull his nose, if he is so minded, he was going home and have a good stiff talk with his wife. It was to be the talk which he had deferred for five years of his wedded six. The first thing Bill was going to say in this talk was to forbid his wife going to church.

The saloon embraced him with its intimate, cordial air. The merry fellowship thrust upon his eyes as he opened the door touched a brave fiber in his heart. At the sight and sound of strong men slapping each other on the back, shaking hands with great flourishes, calling out genial oaths and giving vent to fearsome laughs, Bill drew a deep breath and vowed he would forbid her going to church or know the reason why.

Under the persistent light, which was magnificently reflected by the glory of bottles and glasses arrayed in pyramids behind the long shining bar, freemen harangued each other in grave sonorous tones, praised each other in stintless violent measures, swayed and bellowed and raged in a vast camaraderie that stamped itself upon Bill's soul as a sudden vision of Elysium, of things as they should be. A fine Homeric gust flared his spirit and he eyed the scene with a humble thankful eye and commanded a beer.

Something was wrong with the world outside, something devilishly, miserably wrong. There were strange horrible forces at work, forces which Bill could neither grasp nor explain. He had a confused notion that men were going to seed, did Bill, and that women were acting up in a devastating and sinister manner. He had a vague presentiment that unless something vigorous, something cataclysmic was done about it, the world would become a sniveling, mincing, unprintable place with no room in it for a real man or an honest oath. At this point in Bill's reasoning, logic executed an inexplicable leap and fastened upon Mrs. Johnson and her church-going idiocy as a solution of the entire affair.

Thus he consumed his beer and hung upon the spectacle of strong freemen about him with a sore and grateful heart. He drank alone, listening with one ear to a bellowing argument at his right elbow which was as music to his finer senses. For here strong men were condemning with great poundings of fists upon the bar one of those strange and horrible forces working ruin in the land. Out of the waves of blistering sound which smote the air Bill caught the words, "white livered ministers and old ladies shuttin' off our rights . . . closin' the saloon an' the theayters . . . damn 'em!"

With his other ear Bill obtained knowledge of the fact that close upon his left elbow were four men who considered each other the salt of the earth, who would stand by each other through Hell and Highwater, and who fought valiantly to keep each other from paying for the drinks.

Bill gazed upon his third glass with

a grave, appreciative air. In him high words were beginning to burn. This was the thing—this!

Again he took in with his inner senses the scene around him. Here were no capering, smirking powdered little chickens, giggling and prancing about on skinny legs, no sleek oily youths clinging to them, teasing them with puny caresses, no half-women smoking cigarettes and babbling over pink drinks about politics and scandal. Here were men, good honest men all of them, and Bill suddenly slapped one of those at his left upon the shoulder and commanded him to have a drink.

"On me," said Bill.

The rosy-faced bartender wiped a new space dry on the bar and from the mysterious font beneath him drew forth five brews.

"Live round the corner," said Bill. "Dropped in for a social evening."

"Right-o," said the fattest of the four. "Name's Hume—Joe Hume. Glad meetchu. Boys! Misser Johnson!"

A chorus of joyous sounds arose from the group. Mr. Johnson was pulled into its midst.

"You're a'right," cried one of them, tilting back a derby. "You're awlright!"

Bill drank his fourth beer with a quick warm elation nestling into his heart.

Outside the world was wrong, devilishly, miserably wrong. Men went around rolling their eyes like women, mawkish, simpering men, crushing joyous and fine fellows like himself, turning the universe into a drooling sort of devilish prayer meeting, taking all the stuffing out of life—a lot of blue nosed, hypocritical ringers, grafters, sycophants, fuddy duddy parsons; a blight upon them! A murrain on them! But here about him—life still survived, healthy manhood still sat upon its throne. Here about him people were honest and fearless, truthful and human!

Bill's thoughts were not so coherent or refined as these, but the gaze he leveled upon his seventh beer, the solemn handshake with Mr. Hume, the expansive oaths which he showered upon his new friends, were the scenario of a philosophy to which no pen can do entire justice.

"Whiskey, gentlemen," he announced suddenly, "on me. Fi' whiskeys, son."

Bill had reached the point of transfer. He perceived that he had fallen among friends, noble spirits who understood and admired him. He perceived they were all of them uncommon, virile boys, allies, orators, warriors, ready to defend him against the strange and horrible forces without. He perceived there was a certain glow, luster, undulation to the very scenery—the bar, the walls, the lights, which reflected their indomitable natures.

The whiskey struck at Bill Johnson's soul and liberated it. From it fell the shackles of silence, the weights of woe, the distress of doubt. From it poured into his brain the great light—and the ghoulish miserable forces stood revealed before him.

As one who towers armed above an array of crippled infants, Bill beheld the causes of his rage, the great hypocritical swarms of sanctimonious idiots, stamping out beauty, expurgating life of its color and substance. He beheld this army whining and whimpering in a petulant fury, organizing societies to take away from him his pleasures—a pack of fiendish busybodies, emaciated, driveling, sneaking she-men and he-women ranting over the earth like a disease. With a supreme gesture he flung his arm across the back of his friend Joe Hume and spoke from the heights—

"Wife goes shurch."

Joe Hume sat down his glass with a bang. The four freemen eyed Bill in silence. He drew himself up and gazed in return upon their faces with a martyred eye.

"Wife goes shurch havenother-drink."

The four seized upon their glasses and raised them high.

They crowded round Bill Johnson,

pounding him upon the back, exhorting him in terrible and pointless terms. He slowly felt himself assuming ferocious proportions. In his brain withering, shattering phrases boiled. Marvelous oaths saturated his soul. His heart became great, his sinews massive. He felt the muscles of his body swell and he perceived that he, Bill Johnson, had been affrighted by a mouse. He would step forth into this swaying world and steady it. Beneath his contemptuous eye he saw the walls already trembling, the floor quivering. His legs became like whalebone under him, supporting him with an exhilarating elasticity. His soul became a citadel out of which he would loose a wrath which would bewilder and annihilate the foe. A furious upheaval was transpiring about him. He stood with his glass poised, contemplating with a dauntless eye the slopes and sinister angles which the floor was assuming.

He observed with a grim courage the fact that his allies who had promised to defend and assist him were falling by the dozens about him, rolling about on the floor and dropping into terrible chasms. These were the forces at work against him, these bottomless pits opening at his feet, these terrible advancing slopes threatening to crush and upset him. He would march over them, step above them, leap and bound across them. The strength of a hundred men was in him. Joe Hume was captured. He noted him struggling in the grasp of a giant slope and shouting for aid. He would save him! With a cunning yet powerful leap he would vault over the snares to the side of Joe Hume, his friend, his ally.

Gathering himself for the spring Bill Johnson sailed forward. He was surprised to find Joe Hume so near at hand. He was dimly aware of a miscalculation. He fell upon his friend and embraced him with a great swoop. Tears of pity and understanding choked him.

"Wife goes shurch," he mumbled into Joe Hume's ear and in the distance observed that three men were drinking from preposterously little glasses.

But there was evidently something wrong with this Hume man. He was a devil. He had the strength of twenty devils. He forced him, Bill Johnson, to his knees and left him lying on the floor with the slopes rushing upon him and a great wave of purple sound thundering under his feet and over his head. Deserters, traitors—they were fleeing from his side. The world was wrong, all wrong. He would change it. Carefully he framed a brave appeal to these ingrates who were leaving him alone in the combat. He perceived the four of them crawling over a swaying precipice toward a tiny door which spun like a top. Summoning vast powers of articulation from his innermost depths Bill Johnson reared himself to his feet and hurled fiery, bursting phrases after their retreating backs.

The bartender, mopping a new space dry in front of him, looked up and perceived a short, thin man with a disheveled mustache and bald head swaying in the center of the room, staring with a strange intensity at an Elk's head on a far wall and proclaiming in a quavering hopeless voice,

"Wife goes shurch."

NO matter how long a woman has been married, she feels every man who sees her is sorry she is not a widow.

THE CARAVAN OF ROMANCE

By Peter H. Farrell

I

UP to the evening of January the fourteenth, nineteen hundred and seventeen, Angela Holmes had had six love affairs; and they were all imaginary.

By the morning of January the fifteenth, nineteen hundred and seventeen, she had had six love affairs; and they were all real.

At least they were real to her.

Angela Holmes was twenty-eight, with brown hair and large, soft eyes. But she was one of those women who do not know how to make the best of themselves; and she neither arranged her hair cleverly, nor dressed effectively. She was self-effacing, and years of inaggression had drawn her into a wistful reticence that acted like the cloak of invisibility in the fairy tale.

She had come East with her brother when she was nineteen; and she had somehow managed to create a miniature replica of small-town dullness in a Harlem flat. The years had gone by smoothly and uneventfully; and for all Angela knew the newspapers and periodicals were the chroniclers of events and manners on some distant planet. It really was a distant planet. It was the world.

Then her brother had suddenly married: a stunning, bewildering, historical occurrence. The truth that she was no longer needed, no longer wanted, had paced quietly home to Angela. All her days of patient effort, crowded with minutiæ of forethought and safeguard for her brother's comfort, had carried her to no welcome goal.

There was no place for her. She must go back to the humdrum Western town that still seemed far more authentic to her than the roaring life around her. Aunt Carrie was getting along in years, and no doubt she would be glad to have Angela with her in return for all that Angela could do.

The journey was to mark fitly an epoch. Angela could have caught the train two weeks before it started; and in the excitement of planning this magnificent adventure, she did not halt to weigh justice in her own scales. Why she was going, and what awaited her, were submerged in the romantic problem of how she was to go. And finally one morning in January she started.

The drab truth regarding the unreliability of anticipation's promises was apparent even to Angela at the journey's end. Within two hours of her destination, she tried to marshal the glorious trip in memory, and only succeeded in making the discovery that it hadn't been very glorious after all.

The dusk had fallen, and through the windows of the train she could see the bleak, white level of the land. Ceaselessly, carelessly, with ghostly softness, the snow floated down upon the earth. As far as the eye could travel, there lay a white and silent world. The rhythmic beat of the wheels on the tracks, the groaning of steel tugged from immobility into action, and the low mutter of men's voices seemed strange, seemed unnatural, in that vast stillness.

Angela looked down at the magazine in her lap. She seldom read magazines, but she had bought this one because it seemed to her the proper thing to do,

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Angela looked down at the magazine in her lap. She seldom read magazines, but she had bought this one because it seemed to her the proper thing to do,

and she had read it with rigorous faithfulness.

For the first time she attempted to parallel fiction and life; and the result was that the stories struck her as absurd. All of them were of love, love dejected or love irradiate. Love might be a woman's highest adventure, but surely it wasn't her most common. And these folk who adored and took poison, who loved other women's husbands and talked about their souls in other terms than those of a prayer-book, who had tragic affairs with poets who owned limousines (purchased through poetry) and with money kings and dissipated painters and men of fashion seemed to her irritatingly incredible. And yet—and yet—

Angela glanced up and stared before her. She had just returned from the diner to her rear chair in the rear car. The stately woman with the pretty daughter, the two men who talked to each other in mysterious whispers, the stout old lady—these were in the dining-car now.

Angela noted with a gleam of interest that those who had returned already were all men.

In the falling twilight she responded to some latent feminine urging. She began to construct delicious fancies, far more improbable than the stories she had been reading, in which she played the heroine's part. The car was a yacht and—

She was cast on a desert island with these men. They fought for her and strove to win her favor, and she was adamant. She coquetted and yawned, and they slaved to minister to her delight, bringing her pearls torn from the treacherous oyster and fragrant yams—weren't there such things as yams on desert islands?—prepared with exotic spices. She lifted an eyelid and men struggled for the privilege of serving her. She was illogical and imperious and was adored—oh, desperately! And then at last one man, stronger than the rest, wiser, braver, with the eyes of a dreamer and the lips of a lover, and a will of iron, one man. . . .

Angela was confronted with the exacting problem of selection. Which should it be? Not that plump, pink-faced old fellow with the bristling grey hair. Not that one with the impertinent, good-looking face and the grin. Not the lean, middle-aged man with the wrinkled forehead, who gazed at everything wearily with eyes half closed. Not that handsome, conceited thing who pulled at his mustache, or examined his fingertips with an air of exquisite disdain. Not the man with the dark eyes and untidy hair—he was cast indubitably for the villain. Not that—yes, perhaps!—that homely fellow who stared so hard before him with his head set so well upon his shoulders and his occasional good-humored smile. It was he who should conquer with laughter, he who should be reserved for ultimate triumph. This, of course, after the rest had made their vain, stammering, feverish avowals.

The porter went forward, swaying lightly upon his feet. Angela's dream departed. She was trembling a little. Her preposterous imaginings had been too vivid to be pushed aside with a sheepish smile.

At that moment the handsome man with the moustache rose, fumbling for his cigar case.

He strode up the car, and his eyes fell upon Angela with that unseeing indifference to which she had long since grown accustomed.

When he was abreast of her everything in the world suddenly appeared to go mad. There was a violent jerk as if the earth had clutched at the wheels of the train. A metallic snap, followed by an undercurrent of disordered clatterings, ensued sharply. The handsome man with the moustache seemed to rise in the air, his eyebrows transfixed in astonishment, and the next moment to descend upon Angela like a wounded bird.

At the same instant the lights flicked out in ominous silence, and the car glided smoothly and gently forward to a dawdling stop.

In the darkness a babel of men's

voices rose and clashed in query and counter-query.

The man with the moustache had Angela by the arm; but she was scarcely aware of the fact until suddenly in a tone of profound meditation, he murmured:

"By Jove! It's a woman!"

Angela felt fantastically as if the world, for the first time, had definitely discovered her sex. She was a woman! Astounding!

She found herself almost immediately proceeding forward. Her faculties were in a daze and groped for understanding. But she felt curiously calm. In the front of the car she could make out the vague group of figures, and snatches of excited talk carried to her ears.

"The coupling must have broken. . . . What the devil's the matter with the light. . . . No, the switch isn't in this car. . . . Great Scott! What are we going to do?"

"Look!" said someone suddenly.

Through the windows Angela could see, far off, where the tracks swerved and circled a hillock, the body of the train from which they were now dissevered. The even rows of tiny lights, the straight, stiff cars that seemed hardly an inch high, appeared to sink silently into the hills like a caravan of jewels entering a magic cavern.

Angela was alone with six men in a car, dark and cold, that stood forlorn in desolate reaches of snow.

II

In that moment of required common sense, she found her voice, and reality proved how fatuous her dream of castaways on a desert island had been.

"Don't you think we'd better swing our chairs around and hold a council?" said Angela in her mild, persuasive tones.

The gentleman with the bristling, white hair repeated the tactless surprise of the man with the moustache.

"Good Gad!" he ejaculated. "I thought we were all men!" He added stumblingly, peering hard at Angela in the dark, "I'm rather afraid I swore considerably when this—this occurred. I hope you'll—"

"I didn't swear," said Angela, to her own amazement, "because I don't know how."

From the murmur of laughter that went up, she gathered that she had somehow been witty. She tingled with delight, bewildered at her own audacity. Why she was almost as glib and gay as a character in one of those stories she had been reading.

Suddenly the young fellow with the homely face said:

"Well, what are we going to do? It's plain that the heat connection is snapped, and it's going to get still colder in here in a very few minutes. Does anyone know the country around this place?"

"I do," said Angela, "I was going to get off at the next station."

"Are there any houses near, do you know?"

"I don't think," said Angela, "that there's a settlement, or even a house, for twenty miles."

Someone groaned.

Then the lean man with the wrinkled forehead broke into speech.

"Oh, see here," he expostulated, "they'll discover on the train that they've left us behind, and they'll come back for us."

"Will they?" said the impertinent-faced man in a crisp, skeptical voice. "I'll bet they don't find out for an hour. And if they do, and when they do, they won't put back on a night like this. They'll go straight ahead and telegraph at the nearest station for an engine to come and fetch us."

"This railroad!" muttered the man with the dark eyes. "I shall write a letter of protest immediately!"

The young man with the homely face flung up his hand in a gesture of appeal.

"See here," he said, "before we go any farther, let's get acquainted. I'll start. I'm Bill Boyd and I'm on my way to see my folks in San Francisco."

and she had read it with rigorous faithfulness.

For the first time she attempted to parallel fiction and life; and the result was that the stories struck her as absurd. All of them were of love, love dejected or love irradiate. Love might be a woman's highest adventure, but surely it wasn't her most common. And these folk who adored and took poison, who loved other women's husbands and talked about their souls in other terms than those of a prayer-book, who had tragic affairs with poets who owned limousines (purchased through poetry) and with money kings and dissipated painters and men of fashion seemed to her irritatingly incredible. And yet—and yet—

Angela glanced up and stared before her. She had just returned from the diner to her rear chair in the rear car. The stately woman with the pretty daughter, the two men who talked to each other in mysterious whispers, the stout old lady—these were in the dining-car now.

Angela noted with a gleam of interest that those who had returned already were all men.

In the falling twilight she responded to some latent feminine urging. She began to construct delicious fancies, far more improbable than the stories she had been reading, in which she played the heroine's part. The car was a yacht and—

She was cast on a desert island with these men. They fought for her and strove to win her favor, and she was adamant. She coquetted and yawned, and they slaved to minister to her delight, bringing her pearls torn from the treacherous oyster and fragrant yams—weren't there such things as yams on desert islands?—prepared with exotic spices. She lifted an eyelid and men struggled for the privilege of serving her. She was illogical and imperious and was adored—oh, desperately! And then at last one man, stronger than the rest, wiser, braver, with the eyes of a dreamer and the lips of a lover, and a will of iron, one man. . . .

Angela was confronted with the exacting problem of selection. Which should it be? Not that plump, pink-faced old fellow with the bristling grey hair. Not that one with the impertinent, good-looking face and the grin. Not the lean, middle-aged man with the wrinkled forehead, who gazed at everything wearily with eyes half closed. Not that handsome, conceited thing who pulled at his mustache, or examined his fingertips with an air of exquisite disdain. Not the man with the dark eyes and untidy hair—he was cast indubitably for the villain. Not that—yes, perhaps!—that homely fellow who stared so hard before him with his head set so well upon his shoulders and his occasional good-humored smile. It was he who should conquer with laughter, he who should be reserved for ultimate triumph. This, of course, after the rest had made their vain, stammering, feverish avowals.

The porter went forward, swaying lightly upon his feet. Angela's dream departed. She was trembling a little. Her preposterous imaginings had been too vivid to be pushed aside with a sheepish smile.

At that moment the handsome man with the moustache rose, fumbling for his cigar case.

He strode up the car, and his eyes fell upon Angela with that unseeing indifference to which she had long since grown accustomed.

When he was abreast of her everything in the world suddenly appeared to go mad. There was a violent jerk as if the earth had clutched at the wheels of the train. A metallic snap, followed by an undercurrent of disordered clatterings, ensued sharply. The handsome man with the moustache seemed to rise in the air, his eyebrows transfixed in astonishment, and the next moment to descend upon Angela like a wounded bird.

At the same instant the lights flicked out in ominous silence, and the car glided smoothly and gently forward to a dawdling stop.

In the darkness a babel of men's

voices rose and clashed in query and counter-query.

The man with the moustache had Angela by the arm; but she was scarcely aware of the fact until suddenly in a tone of profound meditation, he murmured:

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Angela's eyes had grown accustomed to the darkness, and now she perceived, with a little thrill, that as he said this he looked directly at her.

She saw, too, that the others seemed to introduce themselves to her alone. She wondered whether any such ceremony would have occurred had she not been present.

And when at last she gave her own name, she thought she could almost hear a faint sigh of relief, and three men began at once: "Miss Holmes, I—"

Now that anonymity was destroyed, Angela gazed about with her mind bent on classification. The handsome fellow who had been precipitated into her arms at the time of the accident was Bradford Webb. It appeared that he was vaguely connected with motion pictures. He wasn't an actor; indeed, impossible as it seemed, Angela heard him mutter something a trifle contemptuous concerning that superior race.

The impertinent-faced man was Henry Townley. He admitted without any embarrassment that he was a salesman of corsets. Angela, with a shiver, decided that his presence made the situation almost risqué.

The lean man with the wrinkled forehead was John Forbes Knight, the lecturer on modern thought. Angela had even read his book, *The Emancipation of Women*, and thought it very wonderful indeed. Like most people she was in awe of print, that veil which stands so often between an interesting voice and the pathetic figure to whom the voice belongs.

The portly man with the pink face and white hair was Theodore Van Horn, an apparent globe-trotter and clubman. And the man with the dark eyes said of himself in a tone so proud and brief, "I am Rudolph Dakes!" that Angela was impressed, and felt ashamed of her ignorance as to who Rudolph Dakes was.

Outside a wind was rising, and the snow descended tirelessly.

A spirit of immense loneliness, of sinister quiet, seemed to hang over the stranded parlour-car.

"Brrr! It's cold!" said Townley, and shivered. "And I've left my grip—I haven't a thing—say, Miss Holmes, do you mind if I smoke right here?"

Angela rose. "Oh, I wish you would. And I just suddenly remembered that I have a bottle of brandy in my bag in case of accidents, you know. Perhaps, perhaps someone would like a little."

She went down the car, and young Boyd rushed after her to carry her grip back for her. To Angela the act was a piece of almost poetic chivalry. She found the flask at which her brother had smiled, when she packed it, with such aloof amusement, and filled the little cap. To Angela, alcohol was Sin's first name; but in this case it seemed to her permissible as having a medicinal value. These poor men! They really were cold. In a very brief time the flask was emptied.

Townley suddenly left in the direction of the smoking compartment at the end of the car, and returned almost immediately.

"Say, have you fellows any matches?" he questioned in a scared voice. "Look again, won't you? I couldn't find one in the holder in the smoking-room back there."

There was a space of tense silence, and three men explored their pockets.

In the meantime Angela felt carefully inside her grip and closed her fingers over the little waterproof container which she had placed in her bag with something of the spirit of an adventurer entering the wilds.

When she had found it, some instinctive wisdom whispered to her to await the dramatic moment.

"Good Lord!" said Townley with utter dejection after the search of the others had proved fruitless, "I've a pocket full of cigarettes and nothing to light 'em with. Was there ever such luck? Damn — darn — that porter's hide!"

"I could do with a cigar," murmured Bradford Webb, the exquisite, with

subdued melancholy. "And my case is full of them—useless!"

"A pipe would make me feel a lot better," muttered Bill Boyd.

"The taste of a good Havana!" sighed the portly Van Horn.

Angela, with her lips trembling in a smile, struck one of the matches she held in her hand, and cupped the flame.

Her eyes, her well-cut face, half in light, half in shadow, seemed almost lovely.

There was a series of exclamations.

"You're a brick!" said Bill Boyd.

"An angel!" declared Townley.

And suddenly Angela was shocked. She was shocked to find that she wasn't shocked as Rudolph Dakes, the celebrated unknown, touched her hand deliberately and secretly. Angela was so happy she could have wept.

It was a little later that she made the suggestion that everyone should try to snatch a little sleep.

"Don't you think we might stay up just a little longer?" pleaded John Forbes Knight in an almost infantile manner.

Angela shook her head and smiled.

"I think," she said gently, "that we'd better sleep if we can. It will do us all good."

Someone sighed. It was, one would have said, a lovesick sigh.

Angela wondered, for one flying instant, whether she were in an insane asylum, the victim of bizarre delusions.

"Miss Holmes," said Bradford Webb, "I've a fine idea. We'll try to sleep in the chairs, but there's a lounge in the smoking compartment where you can lie down."

Dakes snorted.

"I thought of that hours ago," he said with a laugh.

"Very likely," retorted Bradford Webb in a sneering tone.

"Please!" said Angela reprovingly.

Men—*men!*—were actually quarrelling over her!

The next half hour was given up to preparation.

Each man picked out a chair and settled himself as comfortably as possible.

Then Angela swung the next chair around in front of each.

"You can stretch your legs, you see," she explained.

Overcome by this piece of extraordinary wisdom, John Forbes Knight breathed in a low voice:

"You're wonderful! I wish I had known you before . . ."

Nervously Angela moved on. Then with the practical Boyd assisting her, she got down the overcoats from the racks and spread one over each man, carefully tucking in the corners.

Angela felt curiously like a nurse putting a large batch of children to bed.

III

ANGELA retired to the lounge of the smoking compartment, but she did not lie down. She sat there, her head in a whirl. Was all this quite real? It simply couldn't be; she must have been killed in a wreck with these men and they were all in heaven. If so, a sound of angelic voices even now reached her ears. It sounded like the spirit of Bill Boyd talking with the spirit of Webb.

"Did you see her eyes?" queried the motion-picture man. "Glorious! I'm going to get her to go into the pictures."

"Did I?" said Bill Boyd. "Did I?" He added reflectively: "Thank God, she isn't married!"

Why was he thankful for her singleness? wondered Angela. He wanted to—he meant to—he intended to—oh, this couldn't be real! Angela shuddered in a wretched ecstasy.

Sleep was out of the question for the present. Why had she made them all go to bed so early, the poor dears? And were they sleepless, too? But it would be ridiculous to rouse them now!

There was a roar of rushing sound, a gleam of dull light, and a train thundered by on the other track.

The next instant every man stood before the door of the smoking compartment, and voices broke out simultaneously:

"I've come to get you out, Miss Holmes."

"Don't be afraid. There's still time to . . ."

"Just take my hand. I forgot that a train might come along during the night on this very track."

"Yes," said Angela, "we ought to have taken precautions. Have you the time-table there now? We can see whether there are more trains due in this direction tonight."

"Time-table!" ejaculated Van Horn. "By George, the very thing! My dear Miss Holmes, you've a head on your shoulders."

"You have an acute mind," said John Forbes Knight, pointedly revising Van Horn's commendation in a voice of calm superiority.

Angela saw the clubman shoot him a black glance.

The time-table and a match revealed that there was no danger of a collision until eleven o'clock the next morning, and that was a good twelve hours away.

Dakes said suddenly in a cross tone:

"I am not sleepy, I shall sit up."

"So will I," chimed in Townley.

"And I," added Bill Boyd.

Angela noticed that they were looking at her anxiously.

"Perhaps it would be nice," she murmured, "if we all sat up a little while and tried to pass the time talking. I really don't feel at all sleepy. Does anyone feel tired?"

Four chairs were swung in a circle, and Boyd and Rudolph Dakes, in order to be within reach, squatted upon the floor. And for the next two hours there flowed a steady stream of old experiences, random memories, colloquial scraps of the philosophy of life.

IV

In all her days Angela had never known anything quite like that night. It was the hour when the most prosaic actualities are clothed in the glamour of a romantic mood, the hour when the dull tasks of the morrow seem infinitely remote. And somehow the spirit of isolation had fallen upon those six men. They appeared to be uncertain of ever returning to civilization, and forthwith adapted themselves to the conditions and the privileges of the present. And so Angela knew that the talk was for her, and that its merit was to be determined solely by the degree in which it pleased her.

Suddenly she was aware that Dakes, half hidden at the foot of her chair, had her hand in his, and that Bill Boyd lay back with his head resting softly against her other arm.

Then Angela did something which was so frightful that she trembled later on when she recalled it. She returned the pressure of Dakes' fingers, and at same time cautiously passed her hand through Bill Boyd's hair.

The voices droned on.

Bradford Webb told of experiences so wild and fantastic that Angela, on another occasion, would have indignantly refused to believe them. Dakes bestirred himself to revealment. He was a composer of ragtime, it appeared, and at last Angela understood. He had temperament! John Forbes Knight gave several of his lectures without charge. Townley told funny stories, Van Horn spoke of his travels, and Bill Boyd did the best of all. At least it was the most exciting. He turned his head slowly, and, unseen by the others, pressed his lips to Angela's arm . . .

It was late when they at last drifted into sleep. And then after many hours Angela slowly opened her eyes at the sound of voices. The dawn had come, and in that gray light the figures around her seemed strangely grotesque. In the front of the car Van Horn and Townley were talking in low voices. At the sight of her they came forward eagerly. The spell had lasted; it had survived even the cold analysis of the day!

She found some chocolate in her bag, and broke it into pieces. The others had awakened, and from their attitudes Angela gathered that her Paradise was still unviolated.

Then, from the distance, came a muffled, metallic sound. It was an engine come to fetch them. Even as she

heard it, Angela saw reflected on the faces around her a swift change of mood. With a queer faintness of heart she realized that that sound had changed the situation materially. An engine was coming for them! Back to civilization, back where work and play and plans summoned them, back to a world where Angela was only one woman among many.

The men were in the forward part of the car talking excitedly, and oblivious now of her existence, as she washed and arranged her hair. Some time later the car began to move on its way. With a certain constraint Angela talked and waited. She was somehow relieved, as at last the car drew up beside the platform of the dreary station where she was due.

She stepped down amid handshakes and cordial expressions of friendship, but her heart told her that these things were only forms. And, indeed, as the train once more gathered way, Van Horn was saying sententiously:

"Poor girl! I was glad I was able to cheer her up last evening. She's a nice creature, but she's not very pretty."

"It's a good thing to be chivalrous," said Bill Boyd with self-approval.

"An interesting experiment," muttered John Forbes Knight as if to himself.

And as for the other three, they had forgotten her already.

But in the sleigh that climbed the hill in the bitter cold toward Aunt Carrie's, a woman was sitting, a woman who at least once in her life had tasted the homage of sex, a woman who wouldn't forget.

A WONDERFUL MAN

By Howard Philip Rhoades

THERE is a fineness in the face before me that I have never noted in another. The eyes are soft and understanding. They have all the sympathy and love in the world for me. The brow is high and idealistic. It is the brow of a man with a great future.

How firm those strong lips! They are worthy of a super-man. The chin is chiseled with master tools. The nose is a large one—for men who have large noses do big deeds.

The skin is clear and pink. The head is that of a great statesman. The face is one of surpassing strength. How I admire it!

I am looking in a glass at myself.

AS we look back upon our past life, we find our happiest moments were those when we were doing what we shouldn't.

THERE are but two cures for love. Suicide or more love.

A VARIABLE APPROACHES ZERO, BUT—

By L. Bricconcella

LAST week I received in the mails a heavy white sheet upon which was engraved the announcement of the nuptials of my mathematical friend, P. Harmer, to Loretta Kitchen. I turned the thing over several times and read it twice. And sighing a little, I tore it up, ruminating, for the announcement marked the tragic denouement of a long, stern chase.

I'll tell you about it.

It was something like six years ago when Harmer first made the acquaintance of Loretta. This sticks in my memory with a peculiar vividness, for he did not make his first call alone, but in my company.

Harmer had his initial introduction to her at a little informal dance. The following evening he and I were together and he suggested a joint call. He was quite enthusiastic about the girl.

"She's real!" he said to me. "You'll like her!"

In those days I had no better things to do than engage in just such folly, so we set out together.

We stepped along very blithely—everything was an adventure to us then, for we had only been out of college a few months and were, parenthetically, making no more money in a week than we could quite modestly get rid of in half an hour. This, indeed, was a bold factor in Harmer's enthusiasm.

"I believe she's a homey sort of girl," he said. "Too many of these queens want you to spend a wad on them every time you see them. But I believe she'd much rather sit in the parlour, at home. That sort, you know . . ."

So under the circumstances his belief weighed heavily with him.

When we rang the bell, the girl herself came to the door.

For a moment she did not recognize Harmer.

"Don't you know me, Miss Kitchen?" he asked.

She leaned out of the door a little and looked up into his face.

"Oh . . . !" she breathed. "I didn't at first! Come in; this is a surprise."

In the hall the formula of presentation was gone through and I touched her hand. Presently we were all seated.

I watched Loretta as Harmer talked to her. She was attractive and even a little piquant. Her hair was yellow and she wore a heavy plait of it wound around her head like a gold turban. A babyish face surmounted a slender figure—I liked her.

But in some fashion or other Harmer took the reins of the acquaintance completely into his own hands and I was no more than a pale Greek chorus to the evening.

But we did not remain late, and as we walked away from the house Harmer delivered himself of many enthusiasms and asserted his profound determination to repeat the call.

"Are you going again?" he asked.

I decided I had not been sufficiently favoured and so I replied:

"No, I'll give you the field without competition."

This initiated Harmer's affair with Loretta.

I think he took to it at first with so much ardour because in his circumstances, as they were then, the girl was something of a discovery. She was, in fact, what his preliminary observation had supposed her—a rather stay-at-home-creature—or (I am beginning to suspect), liking Harmer, she shrewdly put on the habiliments of that *rôle*.

At any rate, I learned in a few months that Harmer had developed into a steady caller. Indeed, he had assumed a definite evening—I believe even this early he attended Loretta unfailingly every Wednesday. Knowing him, it was the general presumption that this would wear off.

Herein everyone made a grave error. Loretta and Harmer seemed to have cast spells, each over the other. With a regular periodicity they appeared mutually necessary. In a few more months Harmer confided that his evenings were now Wednesday and Friday. He seemed a little worried. No doubt he considered it a sacrifice of very valuable time, for he had a fervent hobby for mathematics which he had heretofore exercised three or four nights out of every week. Loretta must indubitably have encroached greatly upon this.

One passes over the period of a year to find that Harmer's visits had taken on the quality of the inevitable—phenomena, indeed, as natural as the tides and the seasons. Comment had become listless. Harmer went three times in every seven days and the fact was too established to do much talking about.

"Harmer and Loretta"—it was remarkable how naturally one linked those names, but at the same time, strangely enough, never considered them as progressing toward anything.

That Harmer and Loretta might marry was not even a remote supposition.

Here was the peculiar and distinctive flavour of their relation. One simply sensed this—Harmer and Loretta will never marry. It was in the air about them, an aura, one might say, insinuating the intelligence. With no effort, particularly, of the will, it was possible to call up visions of Harmer greying and making increasing use of a cane and calling thrice weekly upon Loretta.

Three more years were completed.

During this period Harmer had made a certain readjustment of his social relations.

Calling on Loretta for a trio of evenings from every week, and retaining still his passion for mathematical nosing, he had dropped most of us in order to make room for his hobby. I was as close to him as anybody—but saw very little of him. One had to arrange weeks ahead to worm out an evening of his company. I considered myself lucky when, toward the close of the year, he promised to take dinner with me.

We dined comfortably and afterward climbed up the stairs to my study, where Harmer sipped on a cigarette and I lighted a cigar.

Harmer wore the worried air which had grown so habitual with him that it seldom occasioned comment. Tonight, however, the lamp-light took him at such an angle that I caught the furrows in his face with an accentuation that reminded me of his inevitable perturbation.

It turned me, however, to my own woes. For some weeks I had been having a disturbing little love affair, so to relieve my soul I entertained Harmer with a confession, to which he listened moodily.

"That's all nothing to me!" he broke out suddenly.

"Why, what's happened to you?" I inquired.

"Not happened," he returned bitterly, "but happening, happening every week. I'm in a devil of a rut!"

It is a little difficult to draw Harmer out—when he resolves upon a confession he does not burst madly into it, but backs and advances and edges away like a horse afraid of water.

Presently, however—the subject weighed upon him momentously—he fell into a steady stream of explication and it was only necessary for me to sit in my chair and thoughtfully listen.

"You see, this rut is serious," Harmer explained. "I've been going to see this girl—four years, isn't it? Yes, that much anyway. It's become a habit—that's the trouble—I don't know what to do! We bore each other to death, yet I can't imagine myself with the regular nights I see her taken away. The habit has become too pronounced . . ."

"You'd get used to it," I suggested.

"Not at all. That is where you don't understand. I tried it, you see. Six months ago I tried stopping altogether. I determined I wouldn't go again. It nearly killed me. I couldn't work; I didn't even sleep—it was like taking morphine away from a confirmed user. I simply had to go back."

He clenched his hands violently.

"The worst part is we don't interest each other. Does Loretta care for anything that I care about? Not at all—the sole thing we can do is make a sort of half-hearted love to each other. . . ."

He paused and frowned intensely.

"It's like the drug habit," he said.

And after a moment:

"But I've figured on a cure."

From his hopeless preamble, this statement, to which he had obviously been leading, was nevertheless a surprise.

I leaned forward and raised my brows in sharp interrogation.

"Look here," he said.

He delved into his inner coat pocket and extracted a large sheet of paper.

He carefully unfolded this and spread it out on the table, shifting his chair nearer.

I looked at the unfolded sheet and observed a block of common squared paper, employed by engineers for tracing curves and by Mr. Babson in his Statistical Summaries. A zigzag curve, like a long flight of steps, had been drawn over the surface.

Harmer put his hand over the curve.

"Look here," he said, "my case bears more resemblance to the drug habit than mere metaphor. It *is* like the drug habit. To cure a man of drugs you can't take away his stuff at one complete sweep—you must reduce the amount gradually.

"But even a gradual reduction, I've discovered, is not complex enough to very successfully meet the problem. When you gradually reduce any powerful habit, there comes a period when the nerves feel the reduction and react so strongly against it that all the ground gained is lost. In other words, the drug user, for example, goes back to the heaviest doses he ever took. . . .

"Or, in my case, to twelve visits a month. . . .

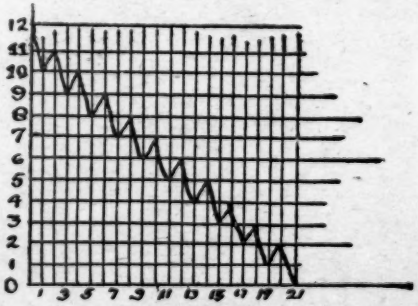
"The successful system of treatment is to reduce through one period of time and *increase* through the next, but never return, quite, to the former high-water mark. In this way the nerves are spared—the periodic increases fool the nerves.

"For example, next month I drop to ten visits. The following month I come back to eleven—which is less than my high-water mark, twelve . . . see? But the following month I go to nine, then the next back to ten. Then to eight—and returning to nine . . . then next . . . but you get the notion. Gradually getting down, you see. In my case, a cure would be effected in precisely twenty-one months—that is, at that time the last decrease would have dropped to zero, meaning complete cure."

"He removed his hand from the curve paper.

"See," he said, "I've plotted it all out on a curve. The line of the ordinate represents visits per month. The abscissus axis represents time in months. You can observe the curve rising and descending until on the twenty-first month it equals zero. It's a very simple problem in mathematics."

To me there seemed a certain dubiety about his method. I examined the curve carefully.



"But do you think it will work out?" I questioned, dubiously. "Somehow . . ."

"Look here!" broke in Harmer. "Isn't it the simplest mathematical proposition? You have a number—in this instance twelve—you decrease it the first month by two and increase it the next month by one and so on, in the same order. It's absolutely certain that number will reach zero. It's the case of a quantity decreased by one constant and increased by a lesser. You've *got* to get to zero!"

He folded up his chart and lighted another cigarette.

It was several months before I saw him again.

I met him then on the street and he greeted me very heartily.

Immediately I observed that some change had come over him and after a little puzzling made out that the lines of worriment had gone off his face!

"It's working beautifully!" he suddenly volunteered.

I was at a loss for the connection.

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you remember my reducing curve? The number, reduced by one constant and increased by a lesser? Well, it's working toward zero precisely as mathematically indicated."

"You mean you don't see Loretta so often?"

"Exactly! Last month I dropped to ten, this month I've gone up to eleven. Next month I'll go to nine. Nerves fine. You could cure any habit after this system. Nothing like applied mathematics."

"Already," he added after a moment, "the interest in the thing has captured us so much that we don't bore each other to half the extent we did. Both of us keep curves; monthly curves. Each month we draw the lines where the actual curve coincides with my theoretical one. It's given quite a zest to our evenings."

Almost six months later I saw Harmer once more and he repeated his first enthusiasm.

Then nearly a year passed and curiously enough I was thrown into business relations with him and on this account I had the opportunity to speak with him nearly every day.

My observation was immediately attracted by the reappearance on his forehead of those thin, concerned lines which for a time had disappeared. I suspected some failure of his plan and questioned him.

"Oh, it's all right . . . fine . . ." he said.

There was a lack of enthusiasm but I attributed this to his general depression and the last to something other than Loretta. According to Harmer, it ought to be but a few months until his cure would be effected.

The notion a little startled me. One gets so particularly used to certain combinations—to be unable, presently, to say "Harmer and Loretta" had a smack of unreality.

But I observed the perturbed expression deepen on Harmer's face. Nevertheless, although he must have realized that I had my eye upon him, he never unburdened himself with a confession.

Indeed, he grew if anything a little sulky. In a few weeks he developed a curious abstraction which appeared daily to increase. Others began to notice it.

"What's the matter with you?" someone would ask. "You don't seem to be half alive!"

"Nothing at all! What are you talking about?"

He never relished these probings into his affairs.

But at last, he told me.

"I've made a fool mistake," he confided.

"About what?"

"The curve. . . ."

"Oh. . . ."

"My calculations were all off!"

The temptation to weakness was irresistible.

"Of course," I said, sententiously. "I told you that. But you insisted it was a plain mathematical proposition. But I felt in my bones your figures would lie!"

"Figures lie!" flared Harmer. "Fig-

ures never lie! It was a plain proposition in the simplest mathematics. I worked it out absolutely to the final and correct solution. Nothing went wrong with that. . . ."

Of course, I was bewildered.

"But. . . ."

"You see," he said, "my problem, as stated, was correct. Given certain premises. The fundamental admission necessary was that I was dealing with a quantity decreased periodically by one constant and increased by a smaller. Under those conditions, it would *have* to work out—mathematics never lie.

"In fact, for some months it appeared to. It wasn't until several months ago that I began to have my suspicions. I wouldn't listen to them at first. But I did at last. . . . realize. . . ."

"What?"

"That I wasn't dealing with constants! That my number was not decreased by a lesser constant and increased by a greater, but that it was a *problem in variable numbers!* In other words, the decrease acted like a constant at first and followed the preconceived curve. But finally I saw it was a variable! Mathematically, a variable may approach zero as a limit, *but it can never be equal to zero!* That's a plain proposition in mathematics. . . ."

"Therefore," I asked him, "a cure is impossible?"

"Impossible of course. Specifically we have a problem in infinitesimal series. The variable, x, equals a certain unit. The first value therefore is: $x=1$ and the general expression of the series is: $x=1-\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{3}-\frac{1}{5}-\frac{1}{8}-$, etc., oo. You see, it *approaches* but it never *equals* zero. . . . Mathematics cannot lie!"

So, naturally, a few weeks later Harmer married Loretta.

THREE MORE LIES ABOUT WOMEN

By Marion Stoloff

I

SHE was very beautiful; by profession, the wife of a millionaire; by vocation, the most successful man-hunter in her set. She posed for the fascinating young portrait painter in her Charity Ball costume of Cleopatra. Her bosom and arms gleamed bare and white; glittering metal cloth outlined the curves of her sinuous pose; jade pendants, falling from carmine-touched ears and between glowing, long eyes were accent marks on a composition calculated to trouble any man. But the handsome young portrait painter felt absolutely no fires within him save the flame of his art—*and her heart sang because she had found a man above the call of the flesh.*

II

THEY had motored, thé dansanted, opera'd and cabareted together for over a year and people were saying that it certainly looked as if she had trumped this time. But he finally broke away. . . . She told Her Most Intimate Woman Friend that she just had to break things off—she simply could not stand the dear boy's jealousy a day longer. *And Her Most Intimate Woman Friend believed her implicitly.*

III

ONCE upon a time—and Scheherazade herself could not imagine for you the name of the place—there lived a woman, who, when her lover had once said, "I love you," was content, *and never, never demanded a repeat-statement.*

THE DIARY OF A PLAY REVIEWER

By George Jean Nathan

FOR the benefit of curious historians and statisticians of, let us say, one hundred years from now —and by way of placing on record a typical American theatrical year in the early period of the present, or twentieth, century—I propose herewith a literal and unadorned, if fragmentary, account of the events and philosophies theatrical of the season of 1916-1917 as those manifestations passed before the vision of one like myself, a professional playgoer. These records, as I say, I shall present in the main without criticism. I shall rather incline myself where possible to the other side and set briefly down precisely what were the gospel adventures of the eye and the ear in the theaters of New York City during the stipulated period. Whether or not my impressions and experiences were the typical and common experiences and impressions of the less regular playgoer, I leave to the latter: I believe they were. And I therefore make bold to hope that this fractional record may be, at some far distant and probably more cultured theatrical day, of some slight archeological interest and value.

THE DIARY

July 31, 1916. To the Cort Theater to see what was announced as a new and original farce-comedy by Mr. Edward Clark named "Coat-Tales." Arrived twenty minutes after the curtain had risen. Discovered a minute later that what I was seeing was the old and familiar Maupassant fur coat *conte* treated to a vaudeville technique. Departed.

August 8, 1916. To the George M. Cohan Theater to see what was announced as a new and original comedy by Mr. Roi Cooper Megrue named "Seven Chances." At quarter of nine o'clock found I was watching the dramatization of a magazine story I had read several years before, a story that was, in turn, a revamping of Hoyt's "A Black Sheep" which I had seen when I was eight years old and of divers stage distillations I had seen at the respective ages of ten, eleven, thirteen—I had the scarlet fever when twelve and was not taken to the theater that year—fourteen, fifteen, eighteen—I was abroad at sixteen and seventeen—, nineteen and on to thirty-five.

August 9, 1916. To the Eltinge Theater to see what was announced as a new and original play by Mr. Max Marcin called "Cheating Cheaters." Found at 9:22 p.m. that I was being made privy once again to the same general type of crook plot that had seen service in a play by Kate Jordan Vermilye called "Secret Strings," which I had seen several years before in the Longacre Theater, at which latter in turn I had found at 9:18 p.m. that I was being made privy once again to the same general type of crook plot that had seen service in an O. Henry story called "Shearing the Wolf."

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August 14, 1916. To the Lyceum to see "Please Help Emily," by H. M. Harwood, the typical British idea of Frenchy farce in which a bachelor, coming home late at night, finds a strange and very pretty girl in his bed and therefore spends the rest of the night at his club.

August 15, 1916. "Broadway and Buttermilk," Mr. Willard Mack, Maxine Elliott Theater. A sentimental document, interspersed with ragtime lays, apotheosizing the superior virtues of the rural yokel. The author was seated in a stage box, chewing gum.

August 16, 1916. To see a mixed identity farce at the Republic named "His Bridal Night," in which the vaudeville Sisters Dolly played the leading rôles and in which the plot demanded that the main male mime be unable to distinguish one of the sisters, who resembles Gertrude Elliott at twenty-one, from the other sister, who resembles Madame Janauschek at thirty-four.

August 17, 1916. To the Astor to see what was announced as a new and original play entitled "The Guilty Man," by Ruth Davis and Charles Klein. Found at 8:43 that I was beholding François Coppée's "L'Homme Culpable" and the only local revamping of the "Madame X" plot since the 10th inst. When Miss Fenwick was not on the stage, read into J. K. Huysmans' "Certains."

August 18, 1916. To the Gaiety to see "Turn to the Right," by the Messrs. Winchell Smith and John Hazzard, a play about the wayward son, the gray-haired mother, the mortgage on the old farm, the skinflint deacon and the real pump.

August 21, 1916. To the Shubert to see "The Happy Ending," by J. and L. Macpherson. An undergraduate Maeterlinckian brew on the merry quality of death. Heaven revealed as a platform covered with grass cloth, illuminated by two powerful white bunch-lights, and peopled by some dozen or more exceedingly bad actors.

August 22, 1916. Thirty-ninth Street Theater—a music show entitled "Yvette." Directly after the opening chorus at 8:25, the German dialect comedian came out, opened his coat, disclosed a loud red vest and addressed a remark to a fellow pantaloon who thereupon struck with his cane upon the comedian's right shin which had a small board attached to it underneath the trousers and so gave issue to a resounding crack. In bed at 8:47. My regularly assigned seat in this theater, J 23, is adjacent to a draughty exit, the Shuberts thus evidently plotting toward my demise.

August 26, 1916. Thirty-ninth Street Theater. A British farce by W. W. Ellis called "A Little Bit of Fluff." A mid-Victorian version of "Please Help Emily," by a writer who imagined that his audience would laugh itself half to death when he caused one of his characters to peek through a keyhole and caused another quickly to pull open the door, thus causing the first character to sprawl on the floor. My seat still adjacent to the draughty exit, the Shuberts doubtless planning, by making these frequent changes of plays in this theater, to bring about fatal symptoms with dispatch.

August 28, 1916. James T. Powers in "Somebody's Luggage," by Mark Swan, at the Forty-eighth Street Theater. The kind of farce in which a man accidentally gets hold of another man's traveling bag and is therefore for the next three months mistaken for the latter by everyone including the butler who has been in the service of the real owner of the bag since childhood. Mr. Powers is the sort of comedian who believes that comedy consists chiefly in walking across the stage at frequent intervals in the manner of a man whose one leg is considerably shorter than the other.

August 29, 1916. To the Longacre to see what was announced as a new and original farce, by the Messrs. Brown, Lewis and Hauerbach, called

"A Pair of Queens." Found at 8:45 that I was spectator at practically the same crook-detective farce I had seen in this same theater the season before—then by Frederick Jackson and called "A Full House."

August 30, 1916. A music show in the Forty-fourth Street Theater called "The Girl from Brazil." Chorus girls' average age, 18 years (B. C.).

August 31, 1916. To the Hippodrome. Excellent amusement for persons who estimate everything by size, and so regard Fatty Arbuckle's posterior as of vastly greater importance than Gerhart Hauptmann's brain.

September 1, 1916. To the Globe Theater to see a farce called "Fast and Grow Fat," by George Broadhurst—a farce every bit as full of laughter as "Rosmersholm." Read L. Lind-af-Hageby's biography of Strindberg and thereafter got as far as page 47 in Georges Pelissier's "Le Mouvement Littéraire Contemporain."

September 2, 1916. To the Playhouse. The play, "The Man Who Came Back." The author, Jules Eckert Goodman. The plot: A dissolute young man so insults a Barbary Coast cabaret singer by implying that she is not virtuous that the young woman becomes an opium fiend and an habituée of a notorious dive in Shanghai. She remains physically pure, however, and once again happening upon the dissolute young man in the dive, marries him and reforms him.

September 4, 1916. "The Flame," by Richard Walton Tully, Lyric Theater. An inscrutable mixture of Central American politics, voodooism, obstetrics and cooch dancing. At 9:27 gave it up as a too difficult job and spent the balance of the evening in periodic discreet peekings over my shoulder at a great beauty enthroned behind me.

September 6, 1916. To the familiar pantomime, "L'Enfant Prodigue," in the Booth Theater. An excellent performance of a form of entertainment that is as interesting to me as Paderewski playing Brahms' solo scherzo in E flat minor on a silent piano.

September 11, 1916. To the Casino to hear a music show called "Flora Bella." Observed on the program that one of the characters was named Prince Demidoff. The allusion to the Prince as Prince Demi-tasse occurred somewhat later than usual, at 9:18. The libretto concerned a man who failed to recognize his wife at a masked ball, the wife being completely disguised by a two-inch mask worn over her eyes.

September 12, 1916. To Edward Knoblauch's "Paganini" at the Criterion, in which Mr. George Arliss succeeded brilliantly in depicting the great Paganini as Mr. George Arliss.

September 14, 1916. "Nothing But the Truth," by James Montgomery, at the Longacre. A new and original farce like "The Naked Truth," by George Paston, which was produced eight years before.

September 19, 1916. Eleanor H. Porter's "Pollyanna," dramatized by Catherine Chisholm Cushing, in the Hudson. Philosophy of the play: One should be happier when one breaks a leg than when one loses a dollar bill, for where the leg will surely, in time, get well again, one may never recover the dollar bill. Read Dostoievski's "Crime and Punishment."

September 20, 1916. W. Somerset Maugham's "Caroline" at the Empire. Oscar Wilde died November 30, 1900. *Verbis meis addere nihil audebant et super illos stillabat eloquium meum.—Job XXIX, 22. R. I. P.*

September 21, 1916. To the Globe to hear a music show named "The Amber Empress." The libretto of the fortune-hunting Count, the climbing American mother, the saucer-eyed daughter in the pink dress and pale blue parasol, the noble young American in the Norfolk jacket and sport shirt, and the final unmasking of the villaino. Music of the bass drum and sandpaper school.

September 25, 1916. "Miss Springtime," music show, New Amsterdam Theater. Mr. Abraham Erlanger, the manager of this theater, believes Hall Caine to be the greatest of living literary artists and his play, "Margaret Schiller," one of the really great dramatic compositions of the present time. I don't. Mr. Erlanger has accordingly punished my insularity by depriving me of my seat in his theater. I did not, therefore, see "Miss Springtime."

September 26, 1916. Cyril Harcourt's "The Intruder," Cohan and Harris Theater. Wife, husband, lover. Husband finds out. Alarums and excursions. Husband forgives wife.

September 27, 1916. To see the Hattons' "Upstairs and Down." Saw Hermann Bahr's "Principle" metamorphosed into a so-called snappy story—a fable of baccarat, bacardi and bordello—Long Island smart society as seen from the vantage point of Long Beach.

September 28, 1916. To the Fulton. "Over Night," etc., etc., with the back drop painted up to represent a Belgian village instead of the usual inn up the Hudson. This time called "Arms and the Girl."

October 2, 1916. To the Thirty-ninth Street Theater. "Backfire," a Charles Klein opus by Stuart Olivier, in which the blonde stenographer turns tables, as usual, on the millionaire who ruined her papa. The Shuberts still assigning me to the seat next to the draughty exit. Their subtle plot succeeding. I catch a chill.

October 3, 1916. "Hush," an English importation, at the Little Theater. An attempt to shock the yokelry by causing a young unmarried girl to talk about having a baby—it subsequently developing that the young unmarried girl who talks about having a baby has written a play about a young married girl who has a baby, to which young married girl's baby the young unmarried girl has all the while really been alluding.

October 4, 1916. To the Maxine Elliott to see William Hodge's "Fixing Sister." Here, the libretto of "The Amber Empress" presented without chorus girls and ragtime tunes and palmed off as "an American comedy." The Duke unmasked and in bad at 10:40. I undressed and in bed at 9:40.

October 5, 1916. To the Forty-eighth Street Theater to see George Broadhurst's "Rich Man, Poor Man," still another conscription of the Cinderella story. In bed at 10:02 p. m.

October 6, 1916. Harris Theater. A hokum version of Galsworthy's "Justice" by the Messrs. Megrue and Cobb, in the last act of which Mr. George Nash and the Lee Lash scenic artist reform a prison.

October 7, 1916. To the Washington Square Players. Four one-act plays in none of which was a red gelatine-slide grate, a fat woman who mistook the piano-mover for her wealthy and fashionable father-in-law, or a burglar who turned out to be a United States Secret Service agent. An interesting evening.

October 11, 1916. To the Garrick to "Le Poilu," a patriotic French music show in the French tongue, financed by the French Otto Kahn and Lee Shubert, with music by the French Sigmund Romberg sung by the French Belle Ashlyn, Pearl Glover and Zelda Johnstone, with dances staged by the French Jack Mason, and scenery painted by the French August Blumendorf.

October 14, 1916. To the motion picture "Intolerance" at the Liberty. This picture, widely announced as the cinema's *chef-d'œuvre*, consisted largely, during the time I remained in the theater, of showings upon the screen of cuties and quotations from the Encyclopedia Britannica. I entertain no personal, or critical, objection to either cuties or the Encyclopedia Britannica. But I don't fancy them together.

October 23, 1916. To the George M. Cohan Theater to see "She Stoops to Conquer" in sub-Mason and Dixon dia-

lect. Title "Come Out of the Kitchen." The Goldsmith, Mr. A. E. Thomas.

October 24, 1916. Princess Theater. A music-show version of Hoyt's "A Milk White Flag" called "Go to It" and disclosing in place of Hoyt's humour a number of chorus girls with such names as Ella Gent, Annie Mosity, Seema Curves and Sal Vation.

October 28, 1916. To the Criterion to view Mr. John Drew in sideburns entitled "Major Pendennis." Author of the sideburns, Mr. Langdon Mitchell. Inspiration of the sideburns, the Thackeray novel.

October 30, 1916. Empire Theater. Scene: "A hall in Cheviot Castle, Northumberland. Night." The hero overhears the whispered conversation of the villain and Mrs. Radford and thwarts their plot. Scene: "The same. Thirty-eight hours later. Early afternoon." The hero marries Diana, the erstwhile fiancée of the villain, whom he has loved from that day—you remember, sweetheart—the sky was blue and the birds, etc., etc. Title, "The Basker." Author, Clifford Mills.

October 31, 1916. To Clare Kummer's "Good Gracious Annabelle" in the Republic Theater. A civilized farce and an amusing evening.

November 2, 1916. "Old Lady 31," a delightful sentimental comedy of old age by Rachel Crothers and Louise Forsslund. Thirty-ninth Street Theater. The Shuberts still assigning me to the seat adjoining the draughty exit. Their plot making excellent headway. I get an attack of tonsilitis.

November 6, 1916. To the Booth to see a performance of Shaw's "Getting Married," a play to be acted in the theater in the same sense that Mrs. Rorer's Cook Book is a book to be read in the library.

November 13, 1916. To the Washington Square Players' new bill of one-act plays, not one of which showed an artist going to sleep and dreaming that his painting of a beautiful girl had come to life.

November 14, 1916. To see Rida Johnson Young's farce, "Captain Kidd, Jr.," a Christian Science version of "Treasure Island." The central comic figure of the manuscript, a country constable who periodically flicked up the bottom of his vest and disclosed his badge of office secreted on his abdomen.

November 15, 1916. To the Neighbourhood Playhouse to see a bill of Shaw and Dunsany short plays. A genuinely satisfying evening. My companion, Mr. Robert H. Davis, forced to admit that Shaw is almost as amusing as Irvin Cobb.

November 18, 1916. To the Harris Theater to see Margaret Illington in the leading rôle of Hopwood's deft naughty farce, "Our Little Wife," which the majority of my colleagues condemned on the moral ground that only young girls weighing under one hundred and two pounds should be cast for objectionable rôles.

November 25, 1916. A woman writes a sensationally successful novel. *She keeps the news from her husband!* Title, "Such Is Life." Princess Theater.

November 27, 1916. To view J. Hartley Manners' drama, "The Harp of Life." Theme: A young man's mother desires above all things that her son shall grow up to respect all women. The young man falls deeply in love with a woman and plans to make her his wife. His mother reveals to the young man the fact that the woman he loves is a common prostitute. The young man therefore grows up to respect all women.

November 28, 1916. A good-for-nothing young city fellow goes to the country. He meets a country girl. She reforms him. He invents a machine which he sells to the Trust for $500,000 and they live happily ever afterward. Title, "Mile-a-Minute Kendall." Creator, Owen Davis. Place, Lyceum Theater.

November 29, 1916. To a Casino music show called "Follow Me." At 9:02 p. m. Miss Anna Held came out

and proceeded to confide to the audience that her eyes were of an exceptionally passionate quality. Inasmuch as I had been privileged the same confidence by the lady back in Evans and Hoey's "Parlor Match" in 1898 or thereabout, I failed to consider the confession news and went across the street to the Opera House.

December 4, 1916. To the Empire to see Sarah Bernhardt. Rosemary in mothballs. . . . Love letters in the hands of the prosecuting attorney. . . . "Auld Lang Syne" by a Jazz band at 3 a. m. . . . Grandmother reading an Elsie book.

December 5, 1916. To the Fulton to see Arnold Daly in Bahr's "The Master." A good play well acted.

December 6, 1916. To the Astor to see a music show named "Her Soldier Boy." Plot of book: He wasn't killed after all, but only wounded. Plot of jokes: "As you say in America, bah Jove, 'I've got your numeral!'"

December 7, 1916. A middle-aged man falls in love with his ward. He hesitates to declare his passion. He declares his passion. The ward says she has loved him all the time. Title, "Margery Daw." Author, George Parker. Place, Princess Theater.

December 22, 1916. To Mr. Belasco's theater to see "Little Lady in Blue," a conventional vehicle for a star actress possessed of all the conventional component parts of such a vehicle save wheels. Thesis: Wayward fellow, sweet soubrette, reform and matrimony.

December 25, 1916. To the Empire to view Barrie's "A Kiss for Cinderella," regarding which my confrère, Mons. Clayton Hamilton, his nose a deep maroon from unrestrained weeping, piped this affecting *chanson:*

"If millions and millions of lilies-of-the-valley were miraculously turned to silver and simultaneously shaken, there would arise a light and laughing music in the world—a music so delicate that it would be inaudible to ears that cannot hear. . . . .

First of all, the infant children, too soft as yet to sit up and take notice of anything but light and sound, would turn their tiny heads upon their necks and smile as if in memory of a noble thought, heard somewhere long ago. Next, the Little People, whose other name is Fairies and who live forever in the minds of those who cannot quite forget, would troop out under leaves and petals, and join their hands and dance around in rings. And high, high up beyond the treetops, the ever-circling stars would sing as once they sang upon the primal morning, ere yet the universe grew old. And everywhere beneath the circling and the singing of the stars, the Tall People, whose other name is Poets, would listen and would softly smile and exquisitely weep. If you have tears, by all means go and shed them as a sort of exquisite libation to the latest masterpiece of Sir James Matthew Barrie, Baronet (for services to humankind); but, if you have not tears, by all means stay away and make room for the rest of us who want to blow a kiss to Cinderella."

Since the play seems to the present somewhat less impressionable writer to be a work considerably inferior to Miss Eleanor Gates' "Poor Little Rich Girl," and more greatly inferior still to Barrie's previous plays, he has decided to stay away, as requested, and allow the moist Mons. Hamilton this extra room wherein to blow kisses.

December 26, 1916. To the Hudson. "The Lion and the Mouse," Vol. II, No. 136. Title, "Shirley Kaye." Rewriter, Hulbert Footner.

December 27, 1916. To Stuart Walker's Portmanteau Theater and the admirable plays of Dunsany. The finest things of the season. An evening to the taste of such persons as fail to enthuse over dramas in which a negro woman goes crazy because her newly born niece is disclosed to have a taint of white blood.

January 1, 1917, matinée. At the Maxine Elliott a play by Mrs. May Martindale called "Gamblers All," an echo of such *contes* of the yesteryear as "A Woman's Atonement, or A Mother's Mistake," by Adah M. Howard, and "Leslie's Loyalty, or His Love So True," by Charles Garvice.

January 1, 1917, evening. To the Criterion to see "Seremonda," by William Lindsey, a romantic drama of the species in which the barbaric Raimon, waving aside Barral, Amfos, Timon, Ugo, Ermengarda, Vidal and Gondolfo,

runs the lover Guilhem through the gizzard with his trusty blade and grasps the coveted and swooning Julia Arthur to his brawny bosom.

January 6, 1917. To the Maxine Elliott to see "The Lodger," the play in which the timid and very gentle comedian is mistaken for a bloodthirsty criminal. Mimeographer, Horace Vachell.

January 8, 1917. To the Lyceum to see a revival of A. E. Thomas' "Her Husband's Wife," a tenuous but adroit comedy in which, on this occasion, the comedy rested chiefly in the spectacle of Mr. Henry Kolker playing a modish beau in a pair of trousers that would have been three feet too long for De Wolf Hopper.

January 10, 1917. Princess Theater. "'Ception Shoals," by H. Austin Adams, the play about the young girl who is brought up on the isolated island, believes that babies are the result of shaking hands and then, on her eighteenth birthday, meets the leading man in the shirt open at the neck.

January 11, 1917. Fulton Theater. "In for the Night," by James Savery, the farce about the couple who are mistaken by the hotel clerk for man and wife and assigned to the same bedroom as the curtain falls on the second act, the curtain rising on the third act (time: next morning) and disclosing the man asleep in the armchair downstairs.

January 15, 1917. To a music show hight "Love o' Mike," Shubert Theater. The kind of entertainment presented annually by the University of Missoula Falseface Club. A so-called smart air imparted to the proceedings through periodic ejaculations of such phrases as "top hole" and "bally bounder."

February 1, 1917. To see what was announced as an inspiring Biblical play in the Manhattan Opera House. Title, "The Wanderer." Plot: A bad boy leaves his home in ancient Hebron in order to see the Russian Ballet which is showing in Babylon. At the performance he falls for a cocotte who robs him and then throws him over for a sailor. He returns to his home town and marries his country girl sweetheart.

February 5, 1917. To the Booth to view Clare Kummer's "A Successful Calamity." Plot: A rich man, whose wife drags him nightly to ulterior functions, longs to spend one quiet evening at home. To this end, he tells his wife he has lost all his money. His longing to enjoy a quiet evening at home thereupon at length vouchsafed him, he discovers that the end of the first act needs an effective "curtain" and promptly goes off to a prize-fight. But a beautifully produced and excellently acted play.

February 6, 1917. To Miss Jane Cowl's "Lilac Time," the kind of war play in which all the soldiers have their hair slicked down with pomade and in which the poor French peasant girl has her mouth rouged into a little Cupid's bow.

February 7, 1917. An old California gentleman goes to sleep. He dreams that his Japanese butler, accompanied by the Japanese butlers of three of his neighbours, invades unsuspecting America and captures the whole Pacific coast. He wakes up and calls on the audience to accept his vision as a warning. Title, "If." Creative Brain, Mr. Mark Swan.

February 9, 1917. To the Morosco Theater to see "Canary Cottage," the kind of music show in which a comedian named Asbestos Hicks explains that his parents named him Asbestos because he was such a warm baby.

February 10, 1917. Little Theater. "The Morris Dance." 8:30 p. m., Mr. Winthrop Ames believes Granville Barker to be a great man. 8:50 p. m., a misgiving seizes Mr. Ames. 9:20 p. m., Mr. Ames calls for spirits of ammonia. 9:36 p. m., Mr. Ames observed in lobby passing Mr. Barker without bowing.

February 12, 1917. To the Maxine Elliott to see Chesterton's charming and unusual play, "Magic," sadly filtered through a 162-pound Patricia, a

Stranger with a voice like the late Ezra Kendall's, and a misty plantation that took a period of time ample for the leisurely palating of five beers at the Kaiserhof bar next door wherein to fade into the drawing-room of the Duke.

February 13, 1917. Criterion Theater. The unpolished Americano with the heart of gold unmasks the Duke who is wooing the young heiress and marries the latter. Title, "Johnny Get Your Gun." Cerebrum, E. L. Burke.

February 14, 1917. To the Washington Square Players' new program of one-act plays. A but moderately interesting bill marred by Maeterlinck's wearying asthma, "The Death of Tintagiles." Still no sign of a one-act play dealing with an actress who, while waiting for her train at a jerk-water junction, patches up a quarrel between a stage-struck country lass and her farmer-boy lover.

February 19, 1917. To the Princess to see the Bolton-Wodehouse music show "Oh Boy." *Two* pretty girls. Therefore exceptionally good entertainment.

February 26, 1917. Fulton Theater. Damon and Pythias in hobo make-up. Much fervent handshaking, old-manning, God-bless-you-Jack-ing, slapping-on-the-back, etc. Title, "Pals First."

February 27, 1917. To see a revival of Barrie's originally warming "Professor's Love Story." Like reading a woman's love letter fifteen years after you've married her.

March 5, 1917. To the Garrick to see E. H. Sothern's play "Stranger Than Fiction." Mr. Sothern's idea of satire provides an admirable satire of Mr. Sothern. Home and in bed before the entr'acte orchestra had got to Dvorák's "Humoréske."

March 6, 1917. To "The Willow Tree," by Rhodes and Benrimo. "Madam Butterfly" on a xylophone. . . . Reading aloud the fable of Galatea in Vantine's. . . . Moonlight on a dish of chop suey.

March 7, 1917. To the Harris to see a play called "The Brat." A street urchin is brought into the home of a well-to-do family, captures the household with her great wit, reforms the dissolute son of the house and marries him. Author, Maude Fulton.

March 12, 1917. To Somerset Maugham's "Our Betters," at the Hudson. Wedekind with a monocle. . . . A young girl reading the *Police Gazette* hidden between the covers of *Town Topics*. . . . The ghost of Clyde Fitch having tea with the ghost of Josie Mansfield.

March 19, 1917. To the Thirty-ninth Street Theater to see Galsworthy's "The Fugitive," an 1895 triangle play into which Galsworthy has inserted a couple of speeches on the British divorce laws of 1915 and so persuaded most of the New York reviewers that his play is "a vigorous, up-to-the-moment indictment of the inequality of a wife's position in the English divorce courts." The Shuberts still placing me next to the draughty exit in Row J, and their plot against me getting on famously. I catch the lumbago and have to see a doctor.

March 20, 1917. To hear the musical comedy "Eileen," in which Victor Herbert shows Reginald DeKoven how he should have written "The Highwayman."

March 22, 1917. To the Bandbox to see the Urban-Ordynski futurist production of Ossip Dymov's play "Nju." Galsworthy's "Fugitive" in motion-picture scenario form, with scenery and lighting effects by the President of Liberia.

March 26, 1917. To the Lyceum to see Vachell's "Case of Lady Camber," the play about the phial of poison, the suspicion attaching to the pretty nurse, the examination of the phial, the finding that the cork has not been pulled and the exoneration of the Nightingale. See "Audrey's Recompense, or How Her Honour Was Spared," by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon and "Her Fatal Move, or Cleared at Last," by Mrs. Alex. McVeigh Miller.

March 28, 1917. To the new one-act plays of the Washington Square Players. Not one of the one-act plays, alas, contained the fine dramatic situation of the husband who returns unexpectedly and finds his wife in her lover's arms, only to be disarmed by the assurance of the latter, a playwright, that the wife and he were merely rehearsing a scene from his new play.

April 7, 1917. To the Garrick to a play called "Grasshopper." A play of German peasant life adapted into a play of Irish peasant life. Chauncey Olcott in "The Weavers." . . . Emanuel Reicher in "The Heart of Paddy Whack." Original author, von Keyserling.

April 9, 1917. The several friends of a young man given to excessive bibbing try to prove to him that his indulgence in alcohol is ruining his mind, his health and his career. The young man, in turn, disproves each and every one of their arguments. In view of which, and by virtue of the further fact that the young man's robust father who has never touched a drink in his life falls dead at the mere spectacle of the young man drinking a small pony of brandy, the play is called a strong argument in favour of prohibition. Title of play, "The Very Minute." The Brieux of the occasion, Mr. John Meehan. Place, Belasco Theater.

April 10, 1917. To the New Amsterdam, by special dispensation, to hear the talented Max Beerbohm's lesser brother Herbert's most recent speech assuring Americans how much he loves them (at $2.50 a head) and his enactment, *en passant*, of a Michael Morton version of "The Newcomes." Thackeray in terms of the Union Dime Savings Bank.

April 12, 1917. A pure Southern girl is abducted and deflowered by a white slaver. Her fiancé, a physician, catches the white slaver after prowling around on a dark stage for fifteen minutes with a pocket flashlight and shouts that he will avenge his beloved's honour by inoculating the white slaver with various experimental toxins. Title, "The Knife." Author, Eugene Walter. Place, Bijou Theater.

April 13, 1917. To the Provincetown Players' one-act plays. Wit in place of the comique with the target sewed to the seat of his trousers, and an observation of life in place of the usual observation of the predilections and tastes of vaudeville audiences.

April 14, 1917. To Ridgely Torrence's negro plays at the Garden Theater. Padraic Colum in black face. An interesting beginning, at least.

April 18, 1917. Republic Theater. A dramatization of Du Maurier's "Peter Ibbetson," with recalcitrant trick scenery and a 200-pound little Mimsey interposed between the manuscript and the imagination. My confrère Hamilton again composes a chanson on lilies of the valley, soft little babies, dancing dandelions and laughing little stars.

April 23, 1917. Went to the Forty-fourth Street Theater and watched Mr. Robert B. Mantell give his celebrated performance of the rôle of Macbeth in his presentation of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice."

April 27, 1917. To the "Midnight Frolic" on the New Amsterdam Theater roof. I drank two cocktails, three glasses of sherry, a quart of champagne and several ponies of Cointreau. The show seemed to get better and better as it went along.

April 30, 1917. To the Astor to see a music show called "His Little Widows," the plot of which requests one to imagine that all the girls on the stage are wild to marry Mr. Carter De Haven.

May 14, 1917. To the Empire to see three one-act plays by J. M. Barrie. The first, "The New Word," the war in terms of Barrie. The second, "Old Friends," dipsomania in terms of Macdonald Hastings. The third, "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," the war in terms of Gertrude Jennings.

May 15, 1917. To the Glen Springs Sanatorium.

CRITICISM OF CRITICISM OF CRITICISM

By H. L. Mencken

ONCE the college professors begin pulling whiskers and calling names there will be a chance for something approaching intelligence to creep into American criticism. The first warwhoop of the possible (and so benign) conflict is emitted by Prof. Dr. J. E. Spingarn, late of Harvard and Columbia, in his "Creative Criticism" (*Holt*). Nay, the learned gentleman goes further: he uproots the first spray of actual alfalfa. As witness: "To say that poetry is moral or immoral is as meaningless as to say that an equilateral triangle is moral and an isosceles triangle immoral." Worse: "It is only conceivable in a world in which dinner-table conversation runs after this fashion: 'This cauliflower would be good if it had only been prepared in accordance with international law.'" One imagines the blushful indignation of Prof. Dr. William Lyon Phelps, with his discovery that Joseph Conrad preaches "the axiom of the moral law"; the "Hey! What's that?" of Prof. Dr. W. C. Brownell, the Amherst Aristotle; the furious protest of the editor of the New York *Times Book Review*, freshly risen from his refusal to believe that Mark Twain ever held such heretical views as are set forth in "What Is Man?" Dr. Spingarn, in truth, here performs a treason most horrible, and having achieved it, he performs another and then another. That is to say, he tackles all the varying camorras of campus-pump critics seriatim, and knocks them out unanimously —first the aforesaid burblers for the sweet and pious; then the advocates of unities, metres, all rigid formulæ; then the historical dust-snufflers; then the experts in bogus psychology; then the metaphysicians; finally, the spinners of æsthetic balderdash. One and all, they take their places on his chopping-block; one and all, they are stripped, vivisected and put away in cans. . . .

But what is the schismatic professor's own theory?—for a professor must have a theory, as a dog must have fleas. In brief, what he offers is a doctrine of Benedetto Croce out of Johann Wolfgang Goethe—a doctrine anything but new in the world, even in Goethe's time, but nevertheless long buried by the eruptions of the seminaries—to wit, the doctrine that it is the critic's first and only duty, as Carlyle said, to find out "what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his eye, and how far, with such materials as were afforded him, he has fulfilled it." And for poet, of course, read the Germanic *Dichter*—that is, the artist in words, the creator of beautiful letters, whether in prose or in verse. Ibsen always called himself a *Digter*, not a *Dramatiker* or *Skuespiller*. So, I daresay, did Shakespeare. . . . What is the poet trying to do? asks Dr. Spingarn, and how has he done it? This, and no more, is the critic's business. The morality of the work, or its lack of it —that, as Maurice Perlmutter would say, is something else again. Has the poet violated the rules of Aristotle? Has he got a heterodox rhyme-scheme into his sonnet? Is his novel too short or too long? Do his iambics trip?

Hal's Maul, du—Narr! Every sonnet, every drama, every novel is *sui generis;* it must stand on its own bottom; it must be judged by its own inherent intentions. "Poets," says the professor, "do not really write epics, pastorals, lyrics, however much they may be deceived by these false abstractions; they express themselves, and this expression is their only form. There are not, therefore, only three or ten or a hundred literary kinds; there are as many kinds as there are individual poets." Nor is there any valid appeal *ad hominem.* The character and background of the poet are beside the mark; the poem itself is the thing. Oscar Wilde, a bounder and swine, wrote beautiful prose. To reject that prose on the ground that Wilde was no gentleman is as absurd as to reject "What Is Man?" on the ground that its theology is beyond the intelligence of the editor of the New York *Times.*

This Spingarn theory, of course, throws a heavy burden upon the critic. It presupposes that he is a civilized man, hospitable to ideas and capable of reading them as he runs. Here the professors all come croppers, from Brownell to Phelps, and from Boynton to Paul Elmer More. Their trouble is simply that they lack the capacity for taking in ideas, and particularly new ideas; the only way they can ingest one is by transforming it into the nearest related formula—often a harsh and far-fetched operation. This fact explains the inability of these pathetic pundits to understand all that is most personal and original and hence most forceful and significant in modern literature. They can get down what has been digested and redigested, and so brought into forms that they know, but they exhibit alarm immediately they come into the presence of the unusual. Here we have an explanation of Brownell's feeble chatter for dogmatic standards; of Phelps' inability to grasp Dreiser and his absurd effort to read a Sunday-school morality into Conrad; of Boynton's sophomoric nonsense about realism; of More's enmity to romanticism, which is simply a revolt against the dead hand; of all the insane labeling and pigeon-holing that passes for criticism among the gifted Harvard boys of the *Dial* and *Nation.* Genuine criticism is as impossible to such pompous vacuums as music is to a man who is tone-deaf. The critic, to interpret his poet, must be able to get into the mind of his poet; he must feel and understand the creative passion; as Prof. Spingarn says, true "æsthetic judgment and artistic creation are instinct with the same vital life." This is why the best criticism is written by men who disdain all the meaningless labels of the academy —by men who go to the business with minds open, and without any baggage of classroom learning—to be specific, by such men as Georg Brandes, Hermann Bahr and James Huneker, who know nothing about prosodies and unities and care nothing about moralities, but have within them the gusto of artists and so carry with them the faculty of understanding. Huneker, tackling "Also sprach Zarathustra," revealed its content in illuminating flashes. But tackled by More, it became no more than an obscure student's exercise, ill-naturedly corrected. . . .

So much for the theory of Prof. Dr. J. E. Spingarn, late of Harvard and Columbia. Obviously, it is a better theory than those cherished by the other professors, for it demands that the critic have comprehension, whereas the others only demand that he have learning, and accept anything as learning that has been sonorously said before. But once he has stated it, the learned instructor, professor-like, immediately begins to corrupt it by claiming too much for it. Having laid and hatched, so to speak, his stale egg, he begins to argue that the resultant flamingo is the whole mustering of the critical *Aves.* But criticism, as humanly practised, must needs be a great deal more than this intuitive re-creation of beauty. For one thing, it must be interpretation in terms comprehensible to the vulgar, else it will leave the original mystery as dark as before—and

once interpretation comes in, paraphrase and transliteration come in. What is recondite must be made plainer; the transcendental, to some extent at least, must be done into common modes of thinking. Well, what are morality, trochaics, hexameters, movements, historical principles, psychological maxims, the dramatic unities —what are all these save common modes of thinking, short cuts, rubber stamps, words of one syllable? Moreover, beauty as we know it in this world is by no means the apparition in vacuo that Dr. Spingarn seems to see. It has its social, its political, even its moral implications. The finale of Beethoven's C minor symphony is not only colossal in beauty; it is also colossal in revolt; it says something against something. Yet more, the springs of beauty are not within itself alone, nor even in genius alone, but often in things without. Brahms wrote his Deutsches Requiem, not only because he was a great artist, but also because he was a good German. And in Nietzsche there are times when the divine afflatus takes a back seat, and the *spirochaeta* have the floor.

Dr. Spingarn seems to harbor some sense of this limitation on his doctrine. He gives warning that "the poet's intention must be judged at the moment of the creative act"—which opens the door enough for many an ancient to creep in. But limited or not, he at least clears off a lot of mouldy rubbish, and gets further toward the truth than any of his rev. colleagues. They waste themselves upon theories that only conceal the poet's achievement the more, the more diligently they are applied; he, at all events, grounds himself upon the sound notion that there should be free speech in art, and no protective tariffs, and no *a priori* assumptions, and no testing of ideas by mere words. The safe ground lies between the contestants, but nearer Spingarn. The critic who really illuminates starts off much as he starts off, but with a due regard for the prejudices and imbecilities of the world. I think the best feasible practise is to be found in certain chapters of Huneker. Here a sensitive and intelligent artist recreates the work of other artists, but there also comes to the ceremony a man of the world, and the things he has to say are apposite and instructive, too. To denounce moralizing is to pronounce a moral judgment. To admire the sonnets of Shakespeare is to have some curiosity about Mr. W. H. . . . The really competent critic must be an empiricist. He must produce his effect with whatever means do the work. If pills fail, he gets out his saw. If the saw won't cut, he seizes a club and knocks in the patient's head. . . .

This is the method of my virtuous brother in the sacred sciences, G. J. Nathan, whose latest tome, "Bottoms Up" (*Goodman*), has just come to issue. His scheme is the eclecticism that I have described, and it is based upon the precise ideas that Dr. Spingarn now exhumes from Goethe and Carlyle. That is to say, he first tries to find out what a given dramatic author is trying to say in a given work, and then he pronounces judgment upon it, not in terms of some preconceived theory of technique, or morals, or psychology, but in terms of logical intelligibility and æsthetic organization. If he finds that a respectable work of art is before him, he announces the fact at once, and with due gusto of surprise. He does not forget technique, but he puts it second. He does not forget the other things, but he puts them third, fourth and fifth. The result is what might be expected. In the eyes of the critical pundits, with their gabble about climaxes, *scenes à faire*, national dramas, Hamlet's insanity and Beerbohm Tree's technique, he is an anarchist and an ignoramus, but the returns show that he unearths more sound and living things than any of them and explodes more frauds than all of them put together.

Nathan's apparent iconoclasm is easily explained: he devotes himself to an art that shows a thousand mountebanks to one honest artist. The newspaper critics approach a new drama

by a Broadway tripe-merchant in all seriousness, sweating damnably to fit it into some preposterous theory—of method, tendency or morals. Nathan, recognizing it at once for what it is, announces the truth and has done—not hotly, in a moral rage, but amiably, in good humor. A work of art? Then so are your grandmother's false teeth! But two of the buffoons, after all, are diverting: one clouts the other with a *Blutwurst* that turns out to be filled with mayonnaise. And one of the girls in the second row has a very pretty twist of the *vastus medialis*. Let us be happy while we may! . . .

But anon there is pretense so hollow that it is impossible to find anything to praise in it. Well, then, let us recreate it, touching up a line here, a color there—the result is burlesque, but burlesque that is the most searching and illuminating sort of criticism. Who will forget Nathan's demonstration that a play by Augustus Thomas would be better if played backward? Here in "Bottoms Up" you will find many other such end-products of his method. He does not denounce melodrama with a black cap upon his head, painfully demonstrating its contumacy to Ibsen, Scribe and Aristotle; he simply sits down and writes a melodrama so extravagantly ludicrous that the whole genus collapses. And he does not prove in four columns of a Sunday paper that French plays done into American are spoiled; he simply shows the spoiling in six devastating lines. The book is not all *reductio ad absurdum;* it is not even all theater. But its roots, nevertheless, are in criticism, and that criticism is sound. It recognizes the plain fact that bad art is not only bad, but offensive. It applies ridicule, deftly and mercilessly, to what is actually ridiculous. There are more ideas in its seventy-three pages than you will find in the whole works of the stale patterers of empty formulæ. . . .

A college critic waits—Prof. Dr. H. Houston Peckham, of Purdue University. I open his "Present-Day American Poetry" (*Badger*) at random, and discover on page 48 that Emerson was "no better stylist" than Hamilton Wright Mabie. I grab again, and find on page 24 that Alfred Noyes is "the foremost poet of our day." Once more, and on page 82 I encounter a protest against the theory that "ours is not a sweet, bright land at all, but a land of crime, adultery, white slavery, industrial oppression, suicide, domestic infelicity and infidelity . . ." God help the poor college boys!

II

But if our university tasters of beautiful letters are bad, what adjective is to be applied to the garrulous old women who serve us as music critics? I extract a sample strophe from "A Second Book of Operas," by Henry Edward Krehbiel (*Macmillan*):

> On January 31, 1893, the Philadelphia singers, aided by the New York Symphony Society, gave a performance of the opera, under the auspices of the Young Men's Hebrew Association, for the benefit of its charities, at the Carnegie Music Hall, New York. Mr. Walter Damrosch was to have conducted, but was detained in Washington by the funeral of Mr. Blaine, and Mr. Hinrichs took his place.

Needless to say, the seminaries have not overlooked this geyser of vapidity: he is an hon. A.M. of Yale. *O Doctor admirabilis, acutus et illuminatissimus!* . . .

Romain Rolland's "Beethoven" (*Holt*) promises more, for Rolland at least has a sense of humor. But the little essay is padded to book proportions with old, old stuff—a dozen or more familiar Beethoven letters; four or five pages of good Ludwig's singularly banal reflections; a dull commentary on the symphonies, sonatas and quartettes by one A. Eaglefield Hull, Mus. Doc. (Oxon), apparently the English Krehbiel; a classification of the piano sonatas "in the order of study" (whose order?); a list of Beethoven's compositions that is no better than any other list of his compositions. Moreover, M. Rolland falls a good deal short of expectation in his essay: the little book of Vincent D'Indy is infinitely

more thoughtful and entertaining. Two-thirds of his space is devoted to rehearsing the history of Beethoven's life—a history long since gone over by all of us. The rest he dedicates to the proposition that old Ludwig was an apostle of joy, and that his music reveals his determination to experience and utter it in spite of all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

It seems to me that this notion is inaccurate. It might be reasonably predicated of Haydn or of Schubert, but to predicate it of Beethoven is close to an absurdity. Joy, in truth, was precisely the emotion that he could never conjure up; it was simply not in him. Turn to the *scherzo* of any of his symphonies. A sardonic waggishness is there, and sometimes even a wistful sort of merriment, but joy in the real sense—a kicking up of legs, a light-heartedness, a complete freedom from care—is not to be found. It is in Haydn, it is in Schubert and it is often in Mozart, but it is no more in Beethoven than it is in Tschaikovsky. Even the hymn to joy at the end of the Ninth Symphony narrowly escapes being a gruesome parody on the thing itself; a conscious effort is in every note of it; it is almost as lacking in spontaneity as (if it were imaginable at all) a piece of *vers libre* by Augustus Montague Toplady.

Nay; Ludwig was no leaping buck. Nor was it his deafness, nor poverty, nor the crimes of his rascally nephew that pumped joy out of him. The truth is that he lacked it from birth; he was born a Puritan—and though a Puritan may also become a great man (as witness Herbert Spencer and Beelzebub), he can never throw off being a Puritan. Beethoven stemmed from the Low Countries, and the Low Countries, in those days, were full of Puritan refugees; the very name, in its first incarnation, may have been Barebones. If you want to comprehend the authentic man, don't linger over Rolland's fancies but go to his own philosophizings, as garnered in "Beethoven, the Man and the Artist," by Friedrich Kerst, Englished by the aforesaid Krehbiel (*Huebsch*). Here you will find a collection of moralities that would have delighted Jonathan Edwards—a collection that might well be emblazoned on gilt cards and hung in Sunday schools. He begins with a naif anthropomorphism that is now almost perished from the world; he ends with a solemn repudiation of adultery. . . . But a great man, my masters, a great man! We have enough biographies of him, and talmuds upon his works. Who will do a full-length psychological study of him?

III

Discoursing, at our last session, upon the new novels, I reported them all bad, and some of them bad beyond endurance. This month, as if the gods would make amends, they send a number of good ones, and at least two that lift themselves far above the average, even of the good. These are "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," by James Joyce (*Huebsch*), and "The Good Girl," by Vincent O'Sullivan (*Small-Maynard*). Two Irish fictioneers, but both transplanted, for O'Sullivan, I believe, was actually born in the United States, and Joyce, the last time I heard of him, was in Zürich. The Joyce book I need not describe at length; it came into vogue immediately it was published, and a Joyce cult now threatens, perhaps in succession to the Dunsany cult. These Gaels all bring something into the writing of English that it sorely needed, and that something is a gipsy touch, a rustic wildness, a sort of innocent goatishness. In part it is merely stylistic: open any page of Synge or Dunsany at random and you will see how they have retaught the tone-deaf Sassenach how to write *pour la respiration et pour l'oreille*. But there is also a profounder side to it. They have recast matter as well as manner. They combat English correctness, English formalism, the curious English anesthesia to ideas, with the mental suppleness and eagerness of a more sensitive and imaginative race.

Dunsany's tales, in their daring, their brilliance, their beauty, reduce the whole work of such a typical Englishman as Eden Phillpotts to an absurdity. A deer cavorts in the forest, a horn winds, it is the springtime of the world; Phillpotts, by contrast, suggests a cow munching alfalfa in a stall. You will find this new air in "A Portrait of the Artist," and again in Joyce's book of short stories, "Dubliners" (*Huebsch*), some of which have already appeared in this favorite family magazine. The novel is an extraordinarily adept conjuring up of the mystery and agony of youth, sure in its effect and original in its method. There is not the slightest hint in it of the usual structure of prose fiction; it is new both in plan and in detail.

O'Sullivan's book is more conventional in its outlines, but nevertheless there is something savory and exotic in it—the Irish rebellion toned down by French logic, a Gallic brake upon the Gael. The protagonist is a Puritan, even a prig, and it is the business of the story to show his disintegration in the face of a profound emotional experience. Upon a young man of normal sophistication, with his wild oats sprouted in cynical flowers, I daresay that the mature charms of Mrs. Sibyl Dover would have produced no more than a flutter of reaction. He would have marked her, besieged her, taken her, and then gone away laughing at her. But Paul Vendred was a softer fellow, and so her collision with him took on the proportions of a catastrophe. Tentacle by tentacle, she fastened herself upon him, until in the end he collapsed utterly, and there was no more man to drag down. . . . The tale is told with the utmost grace and address. It has a logical design; it moves and breathes; it has rhythm and it has poignancy. Vendred, at first glance, seems almost impossible; an air of the fantastic hangs about him. And yet the author makes him wholly real before the end. So, too, with Mrs. Dover. In her the vampire of melodrama takes on plausibility and becomes an understandable human being. The smaller sketches are no less well done —Dover, the grandiloquent bounder, half pickpocket and half dreamer; his daughter Louise, with her swift tragedy, and even the nameless Frenchman who, like a blind man at fireworks, stands before it without comprehending it. Altogether, a novel of very respectable quality—the work of a civilized and reflective man.

Three other pieces worth reading: "The Confessions of a Little Man During Great Days," by Leonid Andreyev (*Knopf*); "His Family," by Ernest Poole (*Macmillan*), and "The Unwelcome Man," by Waldo Frank (*Little-Brown*). In the first, it seems to me, we get the first intelligible picture of the Russian people under the great afflictions of the past three years—despite all the volumes of sophomoric "interpretations" by newspaper reporters and third-rate English novelists. Here, indeed, the tragedy of bleeding Russia becomes suddenly a real thing, searching, present and intolerable. It is a saturnine and cruel book, but one that leaves a haunting image behind it. . . . The theme of "The Family" is the great gulf that yawns between parent and child, the inability of the one to comprehend the other. Old Roger Gale has three daughters. He remembers them as little children, flesh of his flesh, his soul made visible; he sees them toward the end as vague shadows in a mist, eluding him whenever he seeks to come near them. The tale is projected against a vivid panorama of New York, as carefully pointed up as that in "The Harbor." It is a second novel that does not disappoint; this Mr. Poole is not to be sniffed at. . . . "The Unwelcome Man" is the work of a newcomer. It is an attempt to set forth the effects upon a human being of a hostility that began with birth. Quincy Burt came into the world as a resented accident, an error in technique; his course through it, so long as we follow him, is made up of vain efforts to fit himself into it. He vanishes, finally, somewhat mysteri-

ously; there is no catastrophe. Here, at the end, the story lets down a bit, but in its fore parts there is some excellent workmanship. In particular, the one definite episode in amour is managed skillfully and with understanding. A novel that promises a lot. . . . .

Joseph Conrad's "The Shadow Line" (*Doubleday-Page*), of course, belongs at the head of all the month's fiction; it is just as surely first as, in music, a new *Tondichtung* by Richard Strauss is first. Nevertheless, it would be idle to put the story among Conrad's best, or even among his second best. Like "Youth," it is a study of the reaction of young blood to the terrifying, and, like "Typhoon," it is a tale of the indomitable, but somehow it misses the gorgeous poetry of the one and the overpowering drama of the other. Perhaps the last lack lies in the very nature of the story: a ship becalmed is palpably a less thrilling spectacle, whatever the drama aboard, than a ship inordinately battered and thrown about. But aside from this, it seems to me that Conrad has failed to get any genuine glow into it, that he has missed the true conradean subtlety and gusto, that the thing has the air of an imitation—penetrating, but still an imitation. But let there be no repining! More than once there are flashes of the authentic Conrad—in the portrait, for example, of the grovelling steward of the Officers' Home; again, in the portrait of that other steward, Ransome, of the *Melita;* above all, in old Captain Giles. The story, in brief, is no ordinary story. If it pales now and then, it is because it stands in the blinding light of "Nostromo," "Falk," "Heart of Darkness" and "Lord Jim": it is a moon among suns.

Which brings me to lesser stuff: "The Preacher of Cedar Mountain," by Ernest Thompson Seton (*Doubleday-Page*), a romance which begins with a Wild West show and ends with pious tears; "Second Youth," by Allan Updegraff (*Harper*), a farcical chronicle of amour, with a counter-jumper for its hero; "The Hundredth Chance," by Ethel M. Dell (*Putnam*), a dull tale of a *mésalliance;* "The Man in Evening Clothes," by John Reed Scott (*Putnam*), another of the endless variations on the Raffles theme; "Mistress Anne," by Temple Bailey (*Penn*), a dish of sweets; "Bab, a Sub-Deb," by Mary Roberts Rinehart (*Doran*), an amusing sketch of the American *Backfisch,* a personage strangely neglected in our fiction; "Cecilia of the Pink Roses," by Katharine Haviland Taylor (*Doran*), a "glad" book (both of these last, by the way, are capitally illustrated by May Wilson Preston); "The Cinema Murder," the latest Oppenheim (*Little-Brown*); "The Definite Object," by Jeffery Farnol (*Little-Brown*), a reboiling of Van Bibber's dry bones; "Enchantment," by E. Temple Thurston (*Appleton*), a book that I have been unable to read, and hence cannot report on; "The Derelict," by Phyllis Bottome (*Century*), a collection of excellent short stories, some of them already printed in these refined pages; "The Humming Bird," by Owen Johnson (*Little-Brown*), an uproarious baseball story; "Jerry of the Islands" and "The Human Drift" (*Macmillan*), by the late Jack London, the one a South Sea tale and the other a collection of essays, sketches and one-act plays, and both falling far below London's best. . . . .

But I bore you abominably. Perhaps you will get more out of "The Chosen People," by Sidney L. Nyburg (*Lippincott*), the chronicle of a young Jewish rabbi's disillusionment at the hands of his highly secular flock—a story with the rare quality of irony in it, and several very deft character sketches. Or out of "Louisburg Square," by Robert Cutler (*Macmillan*), a tale of Boston, not without its merits, but made a hissing and a mocking by preposterous illustrations by Elise Ames. Or out of "The Eternal Husband and Other Stories," by Fyodor Dostoevsky (*Macmillan*), the latest of the excellent translations of Dostoevsky by Constance Garnett. . . . .

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